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ANGEL™

—AFTER THE FALL—

VOLUME FOUR

ANGEL™

– AFTER THE FALL –

VOLUME 4

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PREVIOUSLY IN

ANGEL

– AFTER THE FALL –

Angel took a stand against Wolfram & Hart. Wolfram & Hart responded by sending Los Angeles to Hell. No one outside of the city is aware of this, and no one in Los Angeles can leave. Wolfram & Hart has also secretly made Angel *human*. The only people who knew about Angel's new condition are a recently deceased WESLEY (forced back by Wolfram & Hart as a non-corporeal ghost) and a DRAGON (Angel's pet and protector who thinks its name is Cordelia). Potions and glamours help Angel mask his humanity.

A guilt-ridden Angel tried to keep a distance from his former allies but was reunited with them after they helped him free the civilian population from the Demon Lords that had seized control of the city. SPIKE asks Angel for help with ILLYRIA (who is reverting back to Fred, and maintains that Fred is fighting for control). CONNOR, who is now dating GWEN (now unable to control her electric powers) and working with NINA, helps Angel with rounds, while LORNE governs all of LA, trying to make the best of a bad situation. GROOSALUGG and Spike's gaggle of super-powered demon ex-ladyfriends help keep the peace.

While on rounds, Illyria deduces that Angel is no longer a vampire and promptly lets some of Angel's allies in on this fact. Angel doesn't have time to deal with this new revelation, though, as he discovers that CHARLES GUNN, long thought dead, has actually been turned into a vampire.

What's more, Gunn is the recipient of visions that he believes are from the Powers-That-Be. The visions guide him, and Gunn thinks he is doing hero's work, even though he is murdering humans, leading a gang of evil vampires, building a shrine composed of dead demon parts, and kidnapping slayers and the telekinetic fish BETTA GEORGE. Gunn is convinced it's all part of a bigger plan to make things right.

He asks Angel to join him, but Angel reasons that the Powers-That-Be are not behind the visions and tells Gunn. Enraged, Gunn beats Angel and drives a sword through his stomach.

As Spike, Connor, the Dragon, and Gwen arrive to help Angel, Gwen reveals herself to be an agent of Gunn. A heartbroken Connor doesn't know what to do… but Spike does. He rushes at Gwen, sword ready. Gwen sends Spike flying with a powerful dose of electricity.

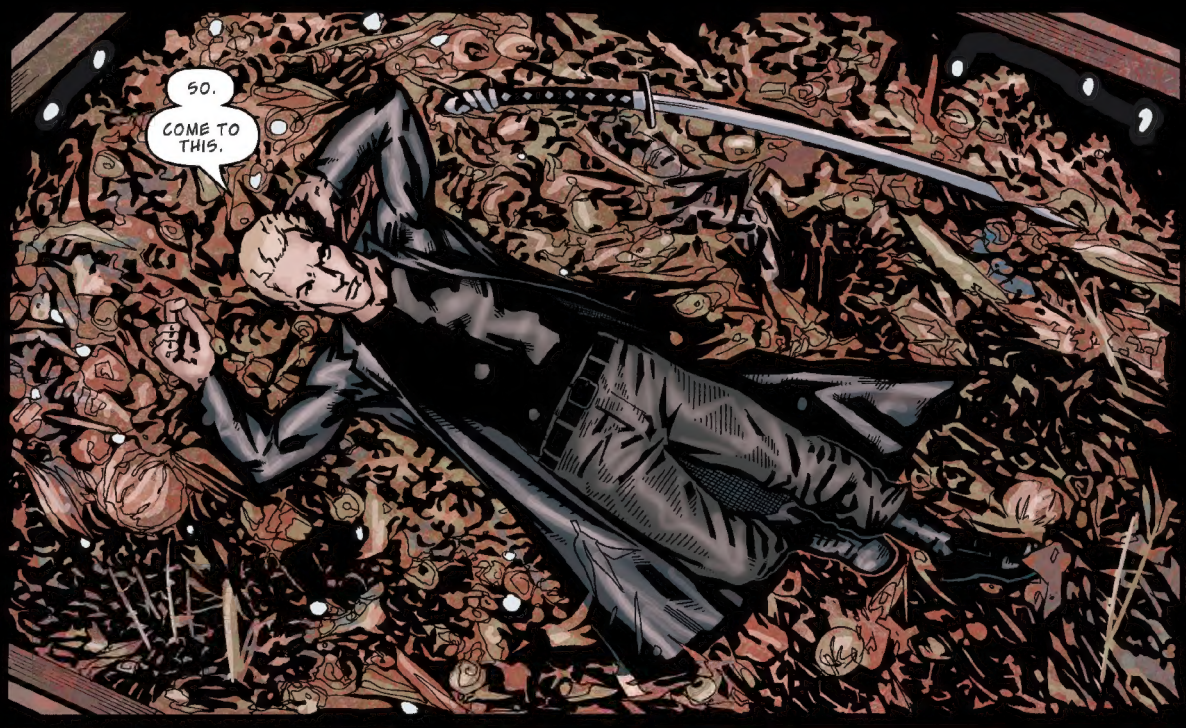
Illyria heads towards the melee, showing extreme frustration that she can't make things right.

Hovering between life and death, Angel is visited by CORDELIA, who tells Angel she was sent there to make his passing easier. Wolfram & Hart, not at all happy about Gunn's sudden outburst, reveal their master plan through Wesley, who is forced to tell Angel that every event that has transpired in Hell (including Gunn's visions) has been orchestrated to manipulate Angel into becoming the vampire mentioned in the Shanshu Prophecy. He is indeed the vampire with a soul that will play a key role in the Apocalypse.

To prove this, they give Angel one vision: a moment from that final battle, so Angel can see what part he will play… Angel sees himself standing amidst thousands of slaughtered warriors, vamped out, covered in blood. Angel will in fact play a part in the apocalypse… just not on the right side.

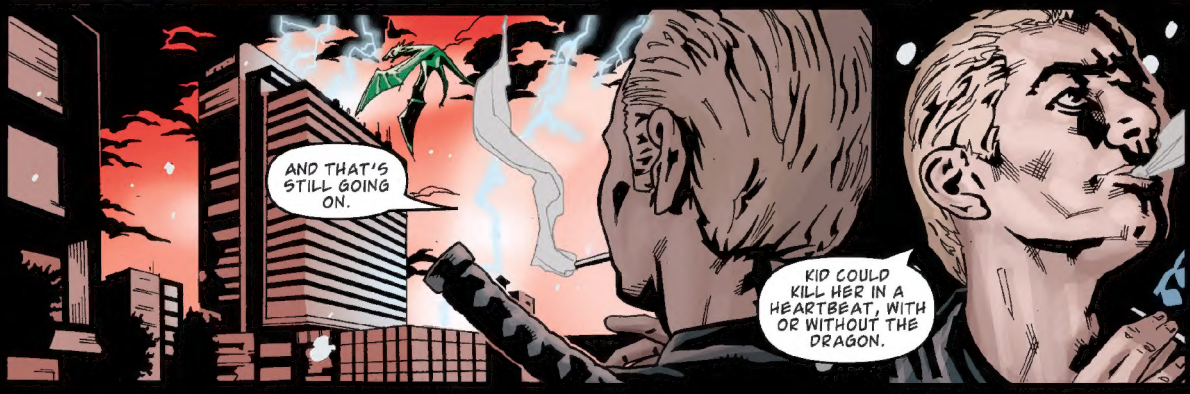
To prevent this from ever happening, Angel chooses death.

chapter one


SO.
COME TO THIS.

"SPIKE, ABANDON YOUR HAREM OF YOU-WORSHIPPERS TO COME PLAY HADJI TO GOOD OL' JONNY BORE.
"I'LL WATCH OUT FOR ILLYRIA BY TAKING HER ON ALL SORTS OF EXCURSIONS THAT INVOLVE FISTICUFFS AND EVEN MORE RESURRECTED PALS. DON'T TOUCH THE DRAGON, THOUGH, THAT'S MY NEW BEST MATE.
BURGE

"WEENSY CHANCE OF BEING FRIED."
BRILLIANT, BUT ONLY IF YOU PROMISE I'LL ALSO BE THROWN OFF A SKYSCRAPER INTO CRAP.

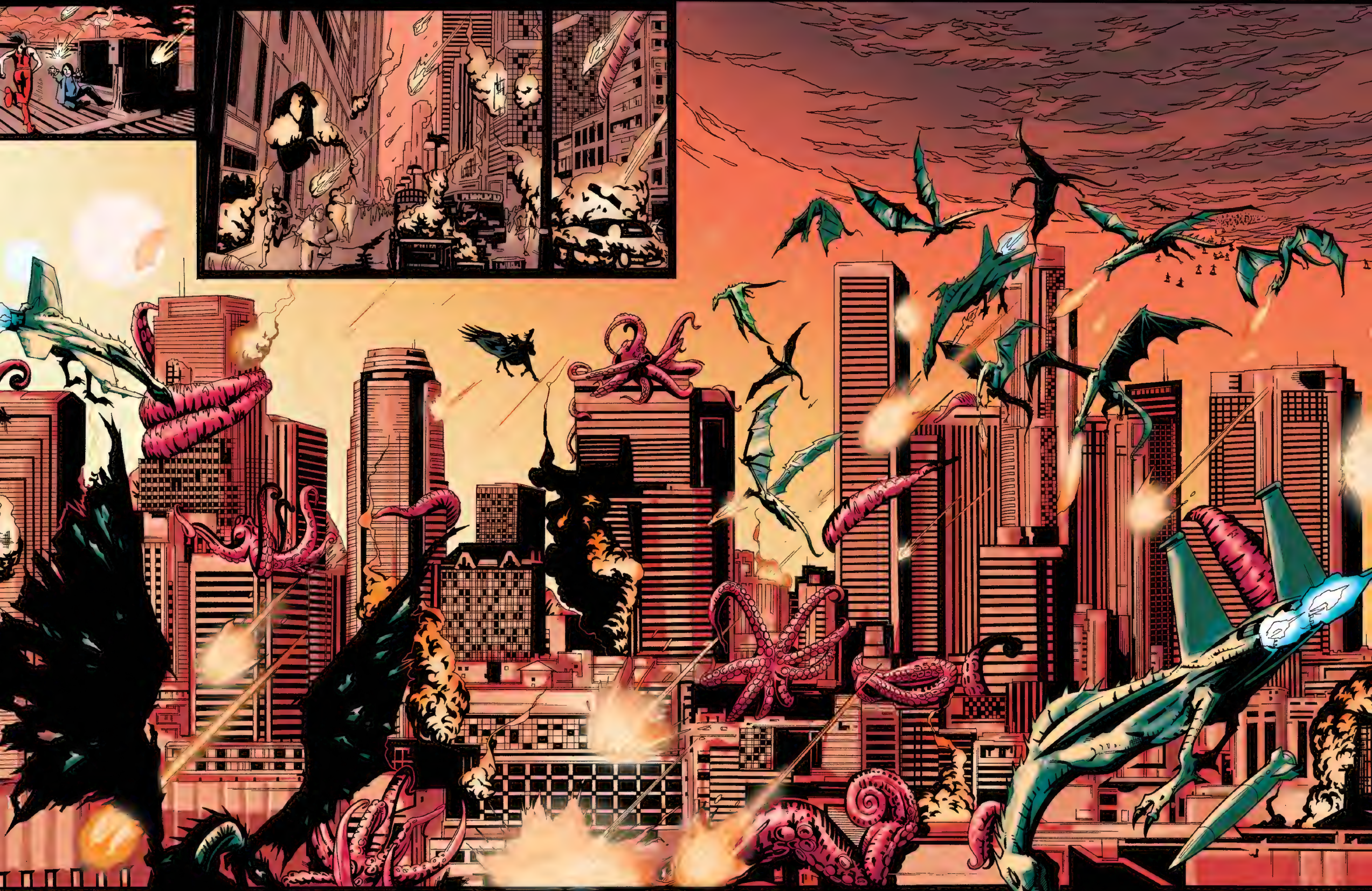

AND THAT'S STILL GOING ON.
KID COULD KILL HER IN A HEARTBEAT, WITH OR WITHOUT THE DRAGON.

SERVICE ENTRANCE
DELIVERIES
CONNOR'S THE SECOND BEST BRAWLER IN HELL—
—BUT HE'S LEADING WITH HIS HEART.
TYPICAL ROOKIE MISTAKE. WE'LL WORK ON IT.
WHAT NOW—?
THE BRIT!
MOM
"THE BRIT." RIGHT.
MIND POINTING ME IN THE DIRECTION OF THE ELEVATOR? GOT BUSINESS ON THE ROOF AFTER ONE OF US GETS DUSTED.

THIS IS GONNA BE QUICK AND PAINFUL!
PROBABLY.
GAAAAAH—
YOU THINK THIS WILL STOP ME?
I SURVIVED SLAYERS!
I DIDN'T. YET HERE WE ARE.
HEH, "I DIDN'T." NO ONE'S EVER AROUND FOR THE REALLY PITHY—
KNOK KNOK
—HMMMM?

HELLO? ARE YOU A PRISONER OR AN OFF-YOUR-ROCKER DEITY KEPT IN THERE FOR THE SAFETY OF YOURSELVES AND OTHERS?
EH, FUN EITHER WAY.
NEVER FEAR, LOVE AND/OR GIT—
UNCLE SPIKE TO THE—
NOW'S OUR CHANCE!
AIM FOR THE PLEATHER!
—RESCUE?
PLEATHER?

ANGEL, WHAT?
WHAT DID YOU SEE?
SOMETHING THAT WILL BE PREVENTED IF I LEAVE WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.
HOW DO YOU KNOW IT WAS REAL?
CORDY HAS A POINT.
COULD HAVE BEEN A LIE.
BUT ON THAT NOTE—
HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE REAL?
IS THE ROOM SPINNING OR IS THAT JUST PRE-DEATH/ POST-DISASTROUS-NEWS DIZZINESS?
WHAT IS THAT?
AS I SAID EARLIER, THIS IS ALL ABOUT ANGEL. YOU'VE HARMED HIM. THEY WANT HIM.
SENDING AN ARMY, HUH? BEEN THERE, DONE THAT.
NO, YOU REALLY HAVEN'T.
OH, YEAH? WHAT DO YOU CALL THE ARMY IN THE ALLEY?
COMPARATIVELY?
THE COMPANY SOFTBALL TEAM.



AWESOME. HELL JUST WENT TO ELEVEN.
THOSE DRAGONS AREN'T WITH YOU, ARE THEY?
NO. AND I THINK THEY'RE JUST THE FIRST HEAT.
EVERYTHING'S COMING HERE.
IT'S ALL COMING RIGHT FOR US.
CORDELIA!

GWEN...
...RUN.
YOU HAVE A SWORD.
AND THEY HAVE EYES. I CAN MAKE THIS WORK. JUST GET OUT OF HERE.
WEREN'T WE JUST FIGHTING?!
I KNOW YOU'RE THE LEADER, AND IN NO MOOD TO LISTEN TO ME—
—SO I'M GONNA MAKE THIS SIMPLE—
—FIND YOUR FATHER, FIND GUNN, I DON'T CARE, JUST GET OFF THIS ROOF.
NO.
YES, SWEETIE.
GO.
THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS. COME TOWARDS THE LIGHT!

OH, CHARLES.
YOU'D BETTER BE RIGHT.
LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

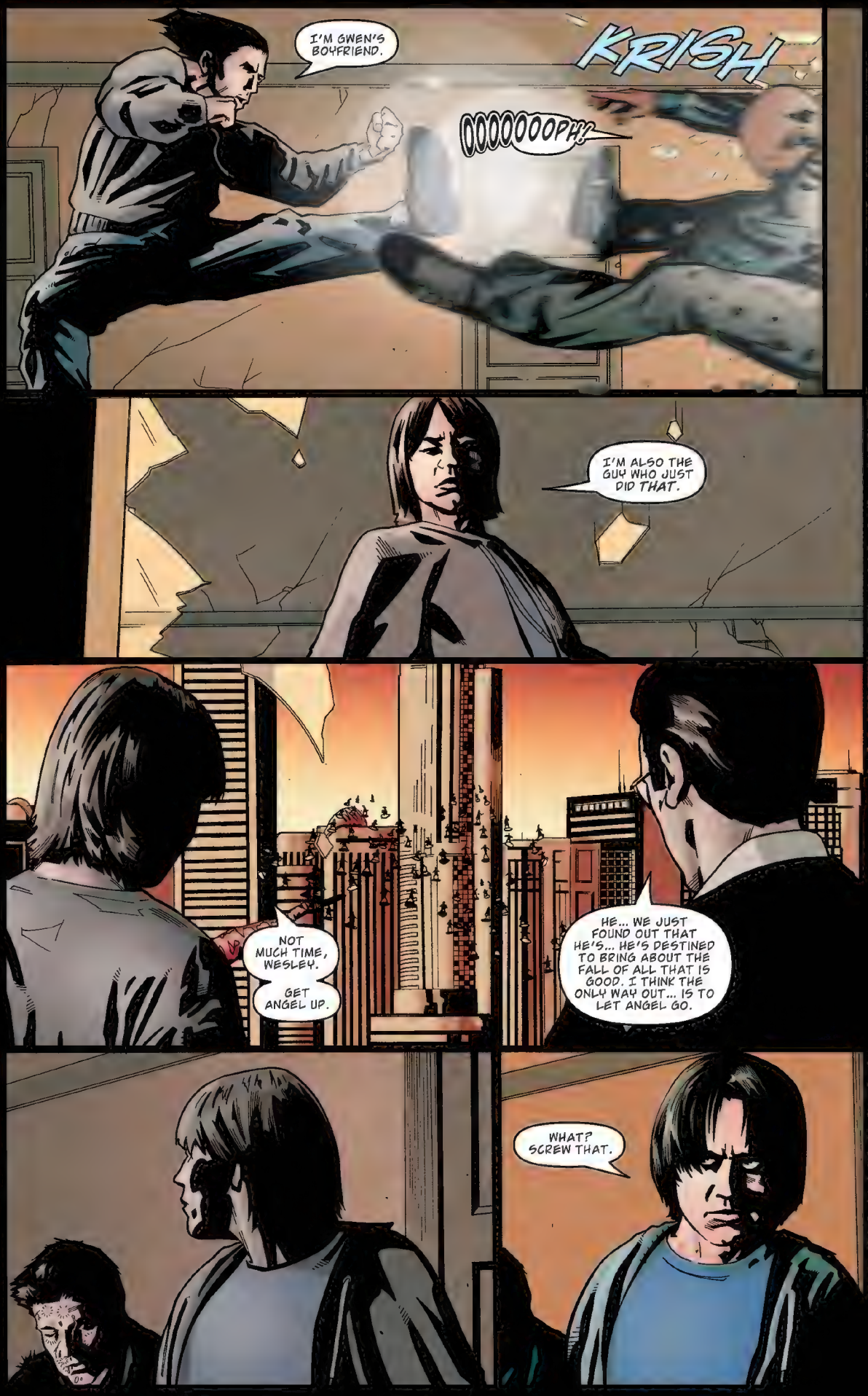
"AND I'M NOT BEING OVERDRAMATIC. SAME THING, YEAR IN, YEAR OUT.
"I TRY TO DO GOOD. I FAIL AT DOING GOOD.
"EVERYONE ELSE PAYS THE PRICE.
"IT HAPPENS TOO OFTEN.
"BUT TWO THINGS ALWAYS EASED THE PAIN, EVER SO SLIGHTLY.
"THE FIRST WAS THE BELIEF THAT IT'S ALL BUILDING TOWARDS SOMETHING.
"I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT HAD TO BE.
"IT HAD TO BE."

"WE SUFFER. WE HURT.
CHK
"WE DIE.
"BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT WAS GOING TO BE WORTH IT.
"BECAUSE WE WERE GOING TO WIN."
EVEN WHEN WE WENT TO HELL, IT WAS GOING TO BE OKAY.
WESLEY BELIEVED IT. GUNN, FAR GONE AS HE IS, STILL BELIEVES IT.
AND I DID. DEEP DOWN, I TRULY DID.
I WAS WRONG.

WHAT THEY MADE WESLEY SHOW ME. WHAT I SAW, WHAT I FELT. I AM THE ONE WHO IS GOING TO TIP THE SCALES IN THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. I'M GOING TO HELP EVIL WIN.
I WANT TO BELIEVE IT'S A TRICK. THEY MADE ME HUMAN, THEY CAN CERTAINLY IMPLANT FALSE IMAGES AND EMOTIONS INTO MY HEAD.
BUT THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE, ISN'T IT? I WASN'T SURE IF YOU WERE ANOTHER LIE.
BUT YOU WANT ME TO DIE.
IF KILLING ME WAS WOLFRAM & HART'S PLAN, THEY COULD HAVE DONE ME IN THE ALLEYWAY. NO, THE POWERS-THAT-BE SENT YOU TO MAKE SURE I GO WITH YOU. THEY KNOW WHAT I'LL BECOME.
I FELT IT. IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.
I TRIED SO HARD TO HELP, CORDELIA.
BUT THE BEST THING I COULD DO FOR THIS WORLD AND EVERYONE I LOVE WOULD BE TO LEAVE.
THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE.
PLEASE.
LET'S GO.

WES, YOU CAN STAND IN FRONT OF ME ALL YOU WANT BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE BOTH KNOW THIS ARROW IS—
—GOING RIGHT THROUGH YOU.
HEY, BABY ANGEL. SO, GWEN FAILED.
PRETTY SURE GWEN'S DEAD.
THAT'S NOT HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TOOOOOPH!
KRAK
CONNOR CAN'T TAKE GUNN. HE CAN'T—
I DON'T KNOW, HE LOOKS PRETTY GOOD.
NOT LIKE THAT, COME ON. I'M A HIGHER BEING.
ALWAYS WITH THE SWINGING AND THE BROODING. HAVEN'T CHANGED—
NOT TRUE.

I MADE SOME FRIENDS. I MET A GIRL. I FELL IN LOVE.
SORRY ABOUT THAT. HAD TO MAKE SURE HE WAS LED DOWN THE RIGHT PATH. WASN'T ABOUT YOU.
NNNNNNN—
IT'S ALRIGHT, ANGEL...
...THAT WAS SAID SOMEWHAT CONVINCINGLY, YES?
ADMITTEDLY, I DIDN'T THINK OF YOUR FEELINGS BUT IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS—
—WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
RAAAAAAAAAAA—
I'M ANGEL'S SON.


I'M GWEN'S BOYFRIEND.
KRISH
OOOOOOOPH!
I'M ALSO THE GUY WHO JUST DID THAT.
NOT MUCH TIME, WESLEY.
GET ANGEL UP.
HE... WE JUST FOUND OUT THAT HE'S... HE'S DESTINED TO BRING ABOUT THE FALL OF ALL THAT IS GOOD. I THINK THE ONLY WAY OUT... IS TO LET ANGEL GO.
WHAT? SCREW THAT.

I CAME IN LATE SO I'M UNCLEAR AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON.
BUT A FRIEND OF A FRIEND ONCE SAID SOMETHING THAT MIGHT HELP YOU NOW. I'M PARAPHRASING BECAUSE WE'RE SHORT ON TIME AND THE DUDE WAS A BLOWHARD.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU WERE. DOESN'T MATTER WHAT PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE GOING TO BE.
IT'S NOT ALL BUILDING TO SOMETHING. SO WE SHOULD STOP LIVING LIKE IT IS. ALL THAT COUNTS—
—IS WHAT YOU DO NOW.
SO IF YOU DIE, I'M GONNA KEEP FIGHTING. BUT I'D REALLY LIKE TO HAVE MY DAD ON MY SIDE.
CORDY—
YOU HAVE TO HELP CONNOR.
—YEP.
OH, YEAH, YOU'RE RUNNING AWAY FROM THE LIGHT. GETTING HARDER TO STAY.
QUESTION...
...YOU SAID ONE THING THAT MADE LOSING LOVED ONES EASIER WAS THE HOPE THAT ALL THIS WAS LEADING TO SOMETHING.
YEAH, WELL, I GUESS WE CAN SCRATCH THAT, CONSIDERING.

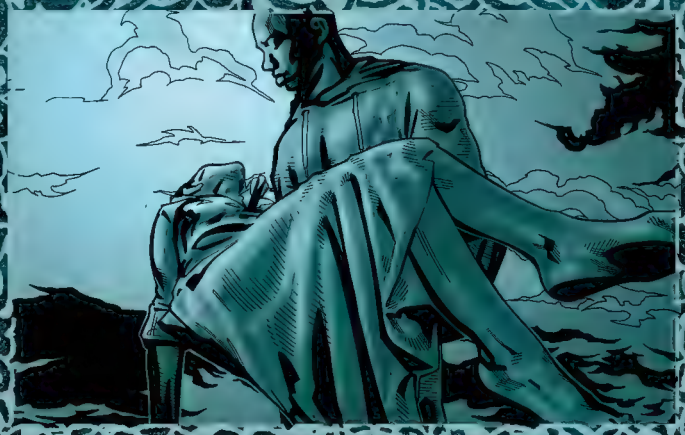
BUT WHAT WAS THE OTHER THING?
THE FACT THAT THE LOVED ONES I LOST—
—USUALLY COME BACK TO HELP ME WHEN I NEED IT MOST.
SEE? ARE THOSE THE WORDS OF THE VAMPIRE DESTINED TO BRING ABOUT THE FALL OF CIVILIZATION? NO WAY!
BE GOOD, BIG GUY.
HE CAN'T STAND UP! HE'S *DYING*, CONNOR—
HE'S BEEN THROUGH WORSE! I NEED HIM UP AND I NEED HIM FIGHTING!
WELL, HOW DO YOU EXPECT *THAT* TO HAPPEN?
AIN'T THAT HARD.
BRINGING PEOPLE BACK FROM THE GREAT BEYOND IS CHILD'S PLAY HERE IN HOTEL DE CHUCK.
TRUST ME. I'M NOT JUST THE PRESIDENT, I'M ALSO A BLOODY CLIENT.
SO. COME TO THIS.

VISIONS NEVER TOLD ME I'D BE GETTING MY ASS HANDED TO ME BY THE KID.
PROBABLY TRYING TO SPARE ME AN INDIGNITY FOR ONCE.
HOW DO THEY EXPECT ME TO WIN IF IT'S ALL SO STACKED AGAINST ME? THERE ARE TESTS AND THEN THERE ARE TESTS... PLEASE, HELP ME.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, I DON'T—
—GET IT.
I KNEW IT.
FRED.
NO.
ARE WE EXPECTED TO FIGHT?
PROBABLY.

YOU'RE NOT THE SAME. IS IT BETTER?
NOT IN THE LEAST. I WANT IT GONE.
WHY? YOU WERE BROKEN.
I'M BROKEN NOW. AIN'T NO WAY AROUND IT. THOUGHT I FOUND A WAY TO FIX IT.
IT WAS YOU.
IT STILL IS. I CAN FIND A WAY. I CAN RESTORE ORDER AND MAKE IT RIGHT.
NO, YOU CAN'T. NO OFFENSE, BUT YOU'RE A MESS.
I REALLY BELIEVED YOU WERE THE KEY. THEY TOLD ME YOU WERE. BUT I THINK I WAS WRONG ABOUT WHO "THEY" ARE.
I WAS WRONG.
GODDAMN IT, I WAS WRONG ABOUT A LOT.
I'M NOT GOING TO SAVE ANYONE, AM I? CAN'T SAVE MYSELF, CAN'T SAVE ANYONE.
DON'T CRY.

FRED...
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?
JUST SEEING THAT FACE, IT'S A START.
OH, GOOD.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
THIS IS WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN.
I WAS RIGHT.

I WAS RIGHT.
THUK
LYNCH • MOONEY
CHA... CHARLES—
THANK YOU, BABY. THANK YOU SO MUCH.
LET'S GET TO WORK.



chapter two

WOLFRAM & HART IS POWERFUL.

WE'RE NOT TALKING TYPICAL LOS ANGELES, AGENT-LAWYER-MANAGER "DESTROY YOUR CAREER" POWERFUL.

IT'S MORE OF THE "SEND THE ENTIRE CITY OF LOS ANGELES TO HELL" POWERFUL.

BEWARE, DEMONIC JETLINER! YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO PLAY CHICKEN WITH THE GROOSALUGG!

THOUGH, IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THAT COULD DESTROY YOUR CAREER, TOO.

WOLFRAM & HART IS SO POWERFUL, WHEN THEY DETERMINED HELL WASN'T QUITE AS SINISTER AS THEY WANTED—

SSSSSZZZ

—YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO PLAY CHICKEN WITH WITH *OBLIVION ITSELF! METAPHORICALLY!*

—THEY SENT SOMETHING WORSE.

ACTUALLY, MANY SOMETHINGS.

MANY FANGED, FLYING, BLOODTHIRSTY SOMETHINGS.

I DO SO HOPE THE WARRIORS FORMERLY KNOWN AS SPIKE'S HAREM ARE WATCHING. A KEEN MIND COULD WALK AWAY WITH *TWO* LESSONS: ONE, A FLAMING SWORD AND COURAGE ARE ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO WIN THE DAY! AND TWO, A WORD-A-DAY CALENDAR *DOES* HAVE ITS USES, EVEN IN HADES. "METAPHORICALLY" WAS MAY 19TH!

AND ALL OF THIS.

ALL OF IT.

IT'S FOR ME.

IT'S CONVERGING THERE! HI-HO, CORDELIA, MY WINGED STEED, AWAY!
SOMETHING DOES NOT WANT US THERE! OH, THIS COULD LEAD TO MY FIRST DEATH! FINALLY I SEE WHAT ALL THE HOI POLLOI IS ABOUT!
IT IS TO WONDER, THOUGH, WHY THAT BUILDING?
"JUST WHAT LIES IN THERE?"
NOT TOO BAD. BEAT UP. STABBED. BONES BROKEN. ARM KINDA GOING THE WRONG WAY.
I'VE BOUNCED BACK FROM WORSE. DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME I WAS BURNT TO A CRISP SAVING SUNNYDALE?
VERY OFTEN. BUT HE'S NOT... HE'S NOT GOING TO BOUNCE BACK LIKE BEFORE, SPIKE.
HERE IT COMES.
ANGEL'S HUMAN. GUNN'S A VAMP.

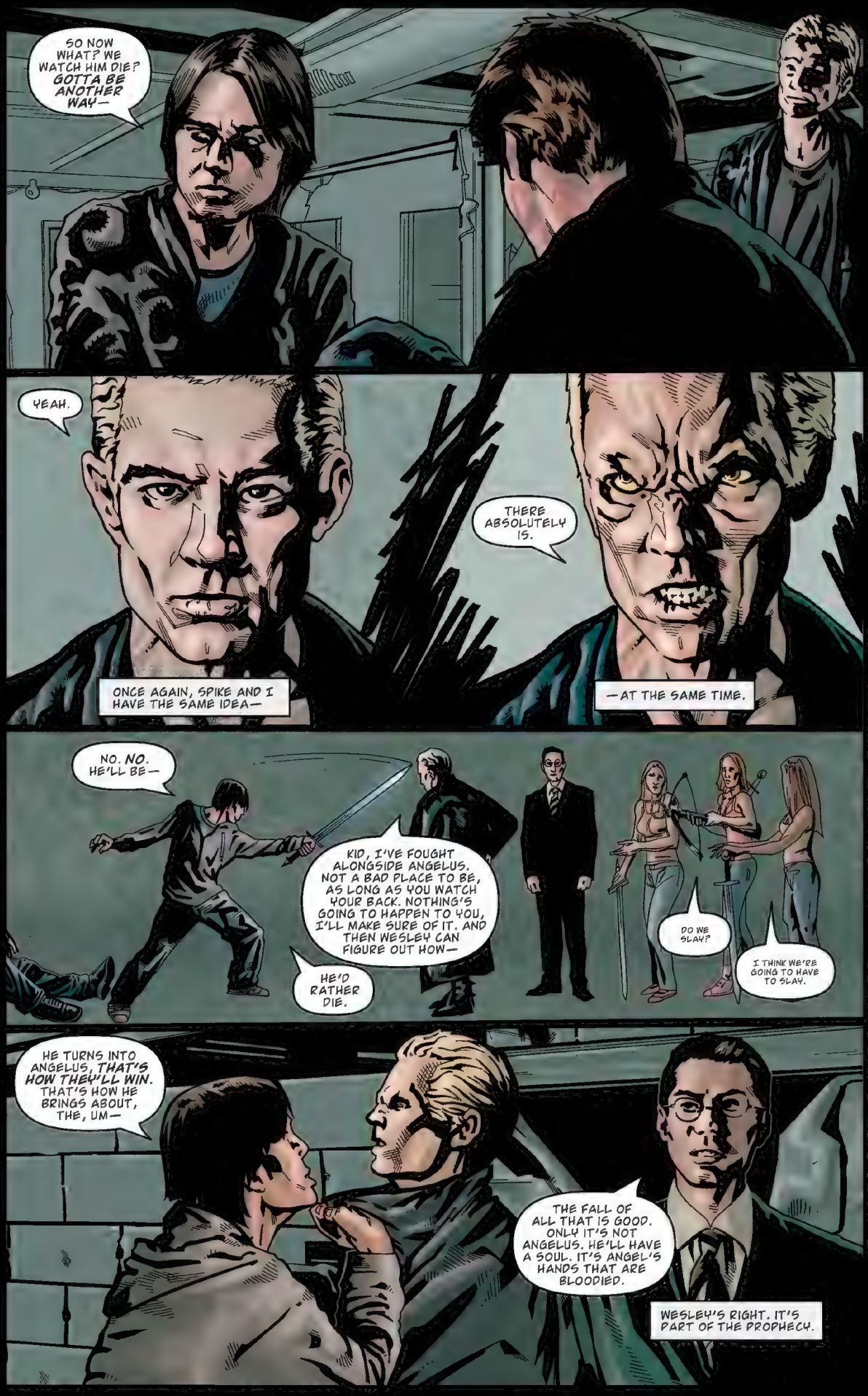
I KNEW HE GAINED WEIGHT! SPIDER TOLD ME I WAS JUST BEING CATTY! CATTY OR BLOODY NOT, I WAS RIGHT AND HE IS HUMAN AND CHUNKY! DOWDY, EVEN—
NERVOUS. RAMBLING BECAUSE HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE NEWS. MUST BE OUT OF CIGARETTES, THAT'S USUALLY HIS CRUTCH WHEN HE'S FLUSTERED.
WAIT, THAT SHANSHU BUGABOO, IT DIDN'T POP WHEN WE GOT AN EXPRESS TICKET TO HELL, DID IT? BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE A WASTE OF A PERFECTLY GOOD VAMPIRE WITH A SOUL. DOES ANYONE HERE SMOKE? ANY OF YOU SLAYERS? NO?
IT'S NOT SHANSHU. BUT, UM. WE'VE BEEN TOLD HOW THAT WILL GO.
DON'T TELL ME, I HATE HEARING THE END OF A BOOK BEFORE I GET THERE.
BUT—
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT! WE NEED TO GET THAT BORING SOD DOWNSTAIRS AND WE NEED TO DO IT NOW! AND SERIOUSLY, IF ANYONE SEES ANYTHING THAT I CAN LIGHT AND PUFF ON THE WAY, YOU BETTER DAMN WELL POINT IT OUT!
I WILL BEGRUDGINGLY ACCEPT CIGARS OR INCENSE OR THE SUPER-SLIM LADY CIGARETTES. LET'S GO!
I'M SORRY. TRULY SORRY.
NOT FOR WHAT I DID. BUT FOR HOW I MADE YOU FEEL.

I KNOW IT'S A MASK. A GOOD ONE, BUT IT'S NOT REAL. JUST LIKE MY MASK, THE ONE WITH THE TEETH AND THE KLINGON BROW, THAT'S NOT REAL.
BUT I STILL HATE SEEING FRED'S FACE IN ANY KINDA PAIN.
SO IF YOU COULD REVERT TO THE OTHER ONE, I'D REALLY APPRECIATE IT.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
A LITTLE OF THE ACCENT IS CREEPING IN. NOT GONNA LIE, THAT IS ALARMING. GONNA SAY IT ONE MORE TIME AND THEN I GET PUSHY. MY FRIEND IS DEAD. YOU KILLED HER. SO STOP PISSING ON HER MEMORY BY GOING THROUGH HER MOTIONS. HEY, LOOK—
—ANGEL LOST ANOTHER GIRLFRIEND. HE WAS BUSY SAVING THAT THING BACK IN THE ALLEY WHILE I WAS MURDERED. WELL, WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?
AND YES, I REALIZE THAT NO ONE IS ACTUALLY LAUGHING. THAT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE.
I ENJOYED SPARRING WITH THAT DRAGON. IT CAME CLOSE TO BEING AN EQUAL.
THERE IT IS! NOW THAT IS UN-FRED. GO WITH IT. CHANNEL YOUR INNER MONSTER. TRUST ME, IT'S NOT THAT HARD.
SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. BECAUSE AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE MY FRIEND BACK—

—I NEED ILLYRIA.
WHOA. I HAD...
...I HAD A BREATH.
I WANT MORE.
TIMESLIPS STILL WORKING, THEN. GOOD. WE'RE SO CLOSE FROM MAKING IT RIGHT.
IF WE CAN GET IN THERE. WOLFRAM & HART SURE KNOWS FROM HISSY FITS, HUH?
OH—!

IT'S FINE! IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY!
THEY DON'T WANT US!
SEE? GONNA BE OKAY. THEY WANT...
...WELL, THEY WANT WHO THEY ALWAYS WANT.

"THE ONE EVERYBODY ALWAYS WANTS."
SO.
NOW WHAT?
ANGEL'S UP AND ABOUT AND BORING US ALL IN A FEW TICKS.
SEE, I KICKED THE DOOR OPEN ALL CHOSEN ONE-LIKE, BECAME ALL SORTS OF DUST AND THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED, THIS HEEBIE-JEEBIE RIPPLED THROUGH MY BODY AND EVERYTHING JUMPED BACK A FEW MINUTES. HAPPENED TO THE LASSES TOO, I'D GATHER. GUNN HAD 'EM IN SOME KINDA TIME LOOP.
MOST LIKELY FOR TRAINING PURPOSES. HE DOES WHAT HE WANTS, TIME RESETS, RINSE, WASH, REPEAT.
SO WHY DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIMESLIPS, BUT THE SLAYERS DON'T?
QUITE FRANKLY, I THINK IT'S BECAUSE I'M SPECIAL. THE THRICE-SAVIOR.
MAYBE YOU CREATED A HICCUP WHEN YOU BROKE THE DOOR. RUINED THE SEAL, THAT SORT OF THING.
EXACTLY, TAKES SOMEONE SPECIAL TO KICK A DOOR DOWN. IF NOT, EVERY SOD WOULD BE DOING IT, NO NEED FOR KNOBS.
OH, HERE IT IS. DID I HAVE A SPARE CIGARETTE FIVE MINUTES AGO? THAT WOULD BE—
DAMN IT.
—WONDERFUL.
IT DIDN'T—?
NO, IT DIDN'T. BECAUSE—
I WAS WOUNDED MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES AGO.
—THIS HAPPENED MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES AGO! AND NOW WE'VE WASTED EVEN MORE TIME!

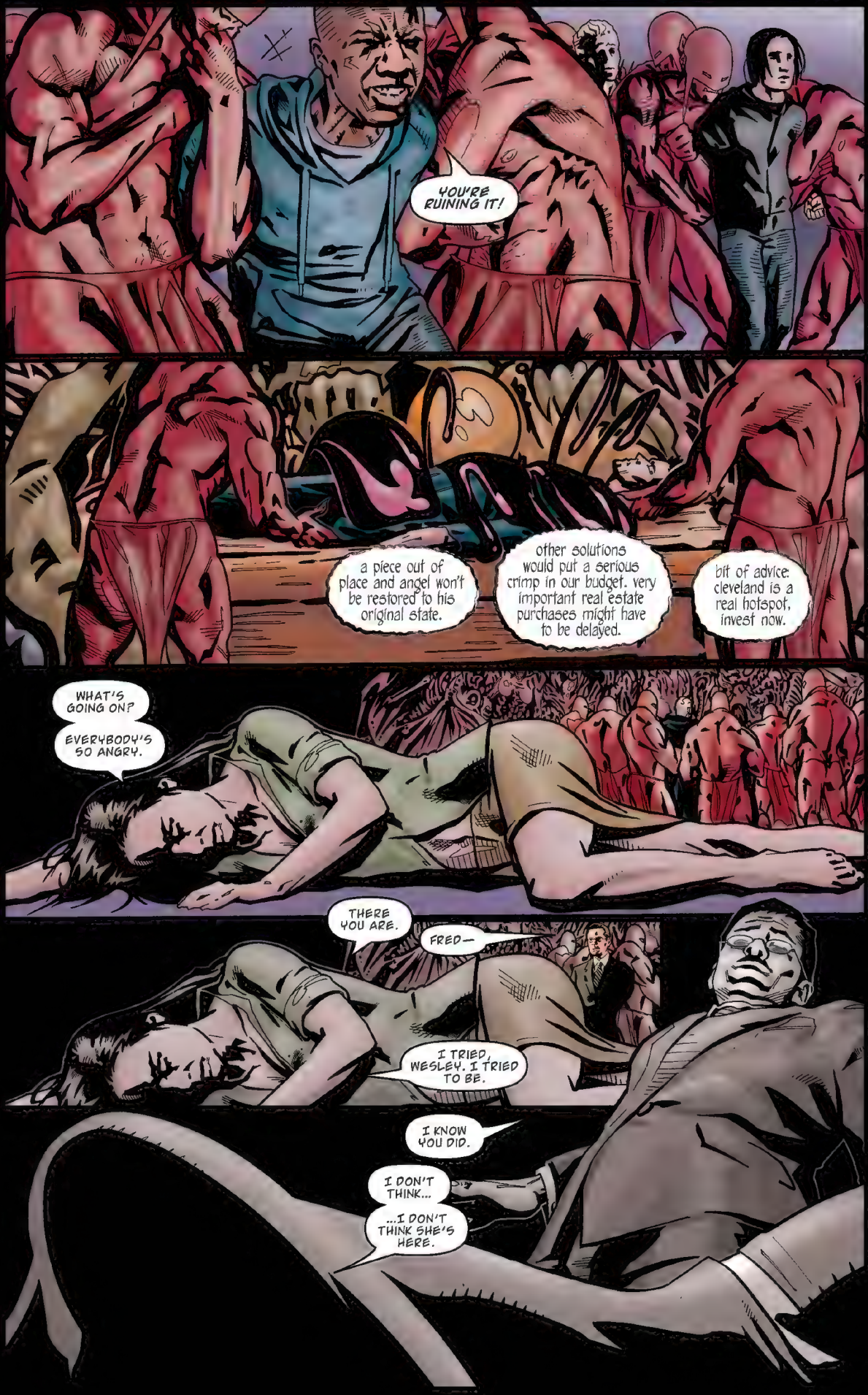

SO NOW WHAT? WE WATCH HIM DIE? GOTTA BE ANOTHER WAY—
YEAH.
THERE ABSOLUTELY IS.
ONCE AGAIN, SPIKE AND I HAVE THE SAME IDEA—
—AT THE SAME TIME.
NO. NO. HE'LL BE—
KID, I'VE FOUGHT ALONGSIDE ANGELUS. NOT A BAD PLACE TO BE, AS LONG AS YOU WATCH YOUR BACK. NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU, I'LL MAKE SURE OF IT. AND THEN WESLEY CAN FIGURE OUT HOW—
HE'D RATHER DIE.
DO WE SLAY?
I THINK WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SLAY.
HE TURNS INTO ANGELUS, THAT'S HOW THEY'LL WIN. THAT'S HOW HE BRINGS ABOUT, THE, UM—
THE FALL OF ALL THAT IS GOOD. ONLY IT'S NOT ANGELUS. HE'LL HAVE A SOUL. IT'S ANGEL'S HANDS THAT ARE BLOODIED.
WESLEY'S RIGHT. IT'S PART OF THE PROPHECY.

A LOOK OF UNCERTAINTY FALLS OVER CONNOR'S FACE.
HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO SAVE ME.
DOESN'T KNOW IF HE SHOULD SAVE ME.
BUT IT BECOMES VERY CLEAR, VERY QUICKLY...
angel
cannot
die
angel
...THAT MY FATE ISN'T UP TO HIM.
angel
will not
die

all for him
kickstart the true journey
bring him to me
"BRING HIM TO ME?" THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THEM.
THOUSANDS. EACH ONE A CONDUIT FOR THE SENIOR PARTNERS.
wasting time.
have to tend to your friend-slash-father-slash-*fall-of-all-that-is-good*
he dies, depletion of resources will be for nothing. already such a crazy fiscal year.
DEPLETION OF RESOURCES?
the amount of money
power
blood
spent per second is staggering.
slipping between moments
ADING BAY
allowing hell entrance
restoring his humanity
DELIVERIES
getting rid of that gaudy tattoo

we could steal him from his timeline again
but there is an easier, cheaper way
THIS IS IT, BABY.
STOP—
YOU SAY YOU'RE FRED. IF THAT'S TRUE, YOU'RE IN THE CLEAR.
GET GEORGE.
DO I HAVE TO COME IN HERE WITH HIM, OR CAN I JUST TOSS 'EM? THE ROOM CREEPS ME OUT—
YOU'RE MAKING MY MOMENT OF TRUTH ALL KINDS OF ANNOYING, GET THE DAMN FISH.

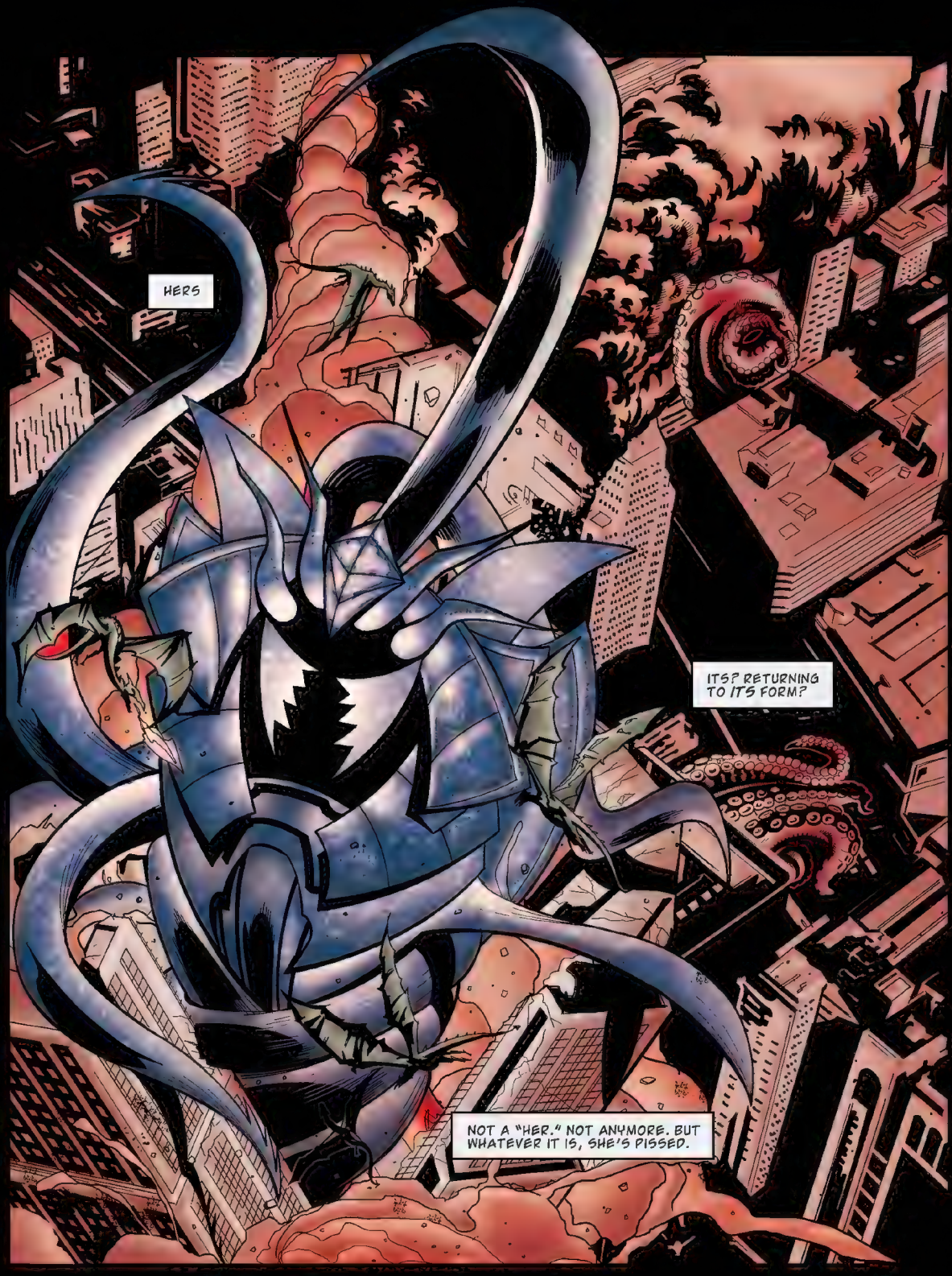
PLEASE—
MAKE IT BETTER.
MAKE ME RIGHT, I KNOW YOU CAN.
OH. ONE SECOND.
I need it.
IT'S NOT FOR HIM!
why do you think we told you to build it?
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME TO BUILD ANYTHING! I'M NOT LISTENING BECAUSE YOU'RE LIARS! THIS IS NOT FOR ANGEL! IT WAS NEVER FOR ANGEL!
we have to work fast. he's no good to us dead.
you had better have built this correctly, charles.


YOU'RE RUINING IT!
a piece out of place and angel won't be restored to his original state.
other solutions would put a serious crimp in our budget. very important real estate purchases might have to be delayed.
bit of advice: cleveland is a real hotspot, invest now.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
EVERYBODY'S SO ANGRY.
THERE YOU ARE.
FRED—
I TRIED, WESLEY. I TRIED TO BE.
I KNOW YOU DID.
I DON'T THINK...
...I DON'T THINK SHE'S HERE.

HER MEMORIES HAUNT ME. I SEE WHAT SHE IS TO YOU, AND I WANT IT. BUT SHE'S NOT PART OF ME. NO MATTER WHAT TIME I BRING US TO. NO MATTER THE REALITY I MOLD, SHE'S NOT COMING BACK. AND WORSE, YOU'RE AREN'T COMING BACK. I'M THE MOST POWERFUL BEING IN HELL AND I CAN'T HAVE WHAT I WANT. I CAN'T EVEN HAVE WHAT FRED WANTS. THERE IS NO ORDER HERE.
NO. THERE'S NOT.
CHARLES TRIED TO BRING OUT MY ORIGINAL FORM. CHARLES THOUGHT THAT WOULD MAKE IT RIGHT.
HIS METHODS WERE INSANE.
HIS REASONING WASN'T.
BLOODY HELL.
what are you—
IT NEEDS TO END.

calm it
squash it
TAKE A BREATH, LOVE.
WESLEY, TELL HER TO BLOODY CALM DOWN, PLEASE—
NO
CAN'T PRY LOOSE.
BONES MENDING.
WOUNDS HEALING.
WOLFRAM & HART'S GOLDEN BOY WILL BE BACK ON HIS FEET IN NO TIME.
AND AS I RETURN TO MY TRUE FORM—

—ILLYRIA
IS
RETURNING
THIS IS IT!
THIS IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
TO


HERS
ITS? RETURNING TO ITS FORM?
NOT A "HER." NOT ANYMORE. BUT WHATEVER IT IS, SHE'S PISSED.

ANGEL—
KOFF
ARE YOU—?
PARTIALLY HEALED.
I MEANT—
I HAVE A PULSE IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GETTING IT.

DO YOU SEE CONNOR?
I DON'T SEE ANYBODY. ILLYRIA BURIED THE ENTIRE BLOCK.
RAAAAAAAAAAH
NNNNNG
DO YOU SEE?!
SEE—
—WHAT?
!?

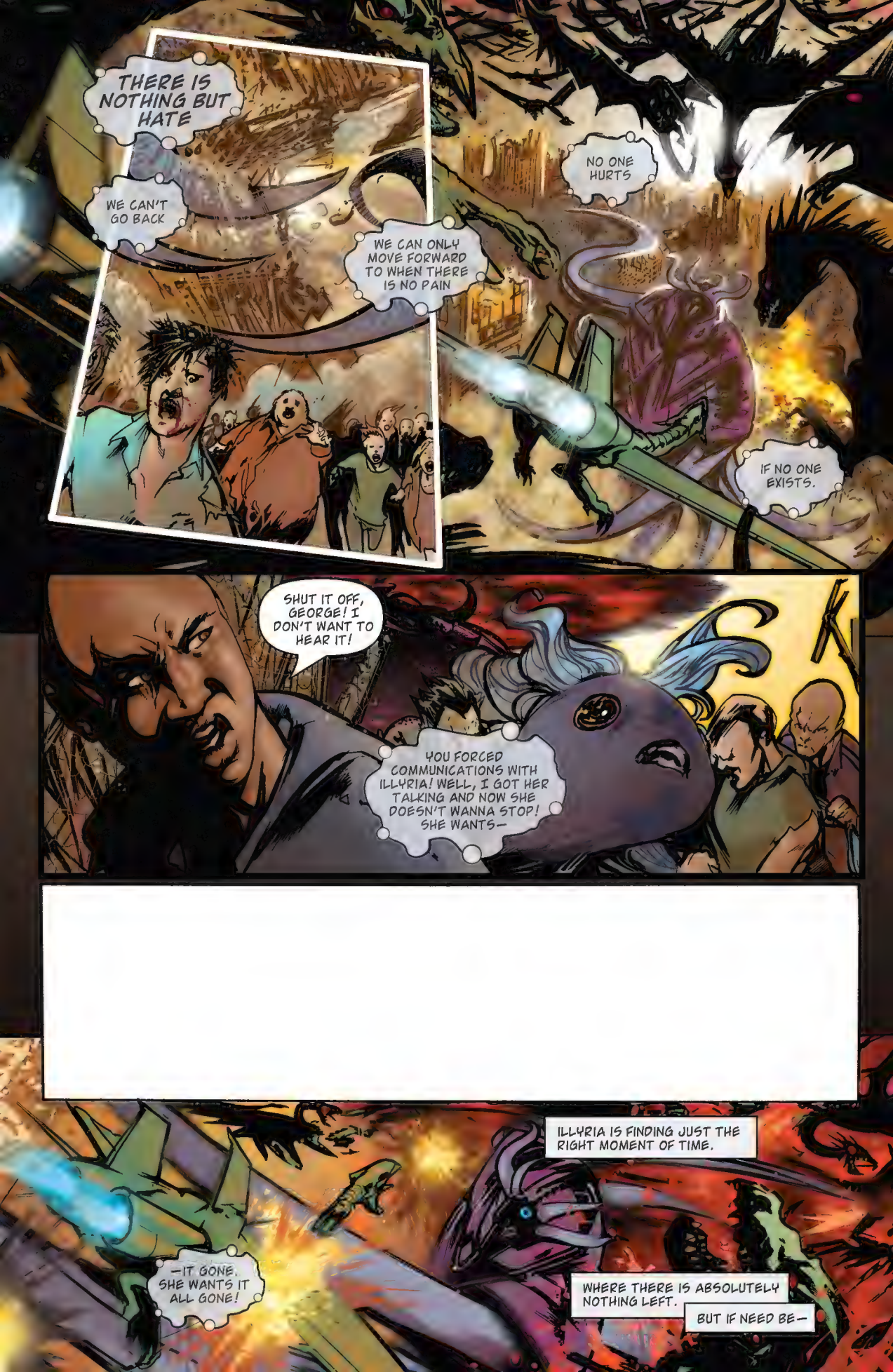
WATCH THIS! YOU WATCH THIS AND THEN I'LL KILL YOU.
GEORGE, TELL ILLYRIA TO SEND US BACK. BACK BEFORE THE FALL. BEFORE ALL OF THIS.
WHAT THE HECK IS AN ILLYRIA?
THAT'S HER.
TALK. TO THAT THING. TELL IT TO DO... ANYTHING. YOU ARE A TRIP, GUNN. SERIOUSLY.
SHE'S ANGRY, ANGEL. SHE'S DESPERATE, THERE'S NOTHING FOR HER.
I TAUGHT YOU TO STEP UP!
THANKS?
BRILLIANT. TAKE A BREAK FROM KILLING ONE FRIEND TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO KILL ANOTHER.
HAVE TO DO THIS. HAVE TO—
KILL HIM. GET TO KILL HIM ALL OVER.

GEORGE. WE HAVE TO GET BEFORE THAT NIGHT. I TRIED TO DO IT MYSELF, BUT ALL I COULD CONJURE WAS A LOUSY FIVE-MINUTE LOOP IN THE BASEMENT.
THAT'S BETTER THAN I CAN DO.
THANK YOU. BUT THAT THING CAN TIMESLIP. IT TIMESLIPS ALL OVER THE PLACE, I'VE SEEN IT.
FINE. BUT AFTER THIS, WE'RE TALKING, YOU AND I. WE HAVE ISSUES WE NEED TO GET ON THE TABLE.
I'M THERE. AAAAAND SHE KNOWS IT.
IS THIS PART OF THE PLAN? I HAVE TO KILL GUNN, AND MAYBE ILLYRIA? AND A FISH, MAYBE A FISH? THAT'S A FISH, RIGHT?
FIRST THING'S FIRST, I HAVE TO FIND CONNOR—
ANGEL—
NUUUUUUH
RIGHT. DEAL WITH ILLYRIA FIRST, THAT'S THE FIRST THING. THE FIRST VERY BIG THING.

WHOA, GUNN. I GOT IN THERE, TRIED TO MAKE A FEW SUGGESTIONS, BUT ILLYRIA'S MADE UP ITS MIND. IT WANTS TO END IT ALL.
SO DO I!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING IT...
SHE'S GOING TO END IT ALL. UNDERLINE, BOLD-FACE. SHE'S COLLAPSING TIME.
SHE'S HAD IT WITH EXISTENCE.
THAT'LL WORK.

chapter three

WOLFRAM & HART MADE ME HUMAN THE VERY SAME MOMENT THEY SENT MY CITY TO HELL.
THEY PUNISHED ME, THEY PUNISHED MY FRIENDS.
THEY PUNISHED EVERYONE.
IT'S ALL PART OF TURNING ME INTO THE DOWNFALL OF ALL THAT IS GOOD.
AND JUST WHEN I THINK THEY'VE SUNK AS LOW AS THEY CAN GO, THEY TURN ONE FRIEND INTO A VAMPIRE BENT ON KILLING ME AND SAVING THE WORLD.
AND PUSH ANOTHER INTO KILLING THE WORLD ALTOGETHER.
IT ALL ENDS WITH A GIRL.


THERE IS NOTHING BUT HATE
WE CAN'T GO BACK
WE CAN ONLY MOVE FORWARD TO WHEN THERE IS NO PAIN
NO ONE HURTS
IF NO ONE EXISTS.
SHUT IT OFF, GEORGE! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT!
YOU FORCED COMMUNICATIONS WITH ILLYRIA! WELL, I GOT HER TALKING AND NOW SHE DOESN'T WANNA STOP! SHE WANTS—
—IT GONE. SHE WANTS IT ALL GONE!
ILLYRIA IS FINDING JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT OF TIME.
WHERE THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING LEFT.
BUT IF NEED BE—

—SHE'LL TAKE IT APART PIECE BY PIECE.
IGNORE THE WHINY HEAD REVELATIONS! 'TIS BUT A DISTRACTION! FIGHT ON! FIGHT HARD! SLAY THE BEAST!
GROO AND ILLYRIA'S FORMER GROTTO-MATES DO THEIR BEST TO KEEP PEACE—
SAVE THE MASSES! WIN THE DAY!
—UNTIL ILLYRIA SPOTS THEM.
BRUTAL. SHE'S BRUTAL WITH THEM. SHE HAS A GRUDGE.
OH.
THIS LOOKS INSURMOUNTABLE.
THIS DEATH IS HARDLY GLORIOUS ENOUGH.

IS FRED IN THERE AT ALL?
ILLYRIA DESPERATELY WANTS THERE TO BE. THERE ARE FLEETING MOMENTS, IN TIMESLIPS, MOSTLY, WHERE IT CAN FORCE AN APPEARANCE. BUT LOOK AROUND—
"—LOOK AT WHAT IT'S DOING."
COME ON, IT'S OKAY, IT'S ALRIGHT, GET IN HERE...
"IF THERE WAS A GLIMMER OF FRED INSIDE, SHE'D STOP IT.
"THAT'S NOT HER."
FRED'S GONE.

THOUGH IT...
...IT THINKS IT'S DOING WHAT FRED WOULD DO. IT'S TRYING TO END THE SUFFERING BY ENDING EVERYTHING. DO YOU WANT TO DISCUSS OUR OPTIONS? MAYBE TOGETHER WE CAN, YOU KNOW, WORKSHOP?
OKAY, BEST WAY TO STOP A TEN-STORY GODLIKE MONSTER FROM DESTROYING EXISTENCE? I'M GONNA GO WITH HITTING, YOU HAVE ANYTHING?
YOU TOOK MINE.

GUNN
—FOR WHATEVER REASON—
WANTS YOU TO LEAVE HER ALONE.
HAVE YOU TALKED TO HIM LATELY? GUNN WANTS SOME SERIOUSLY WACKY THINGS.
I KNOW, RIGHT? BUT WE WENT THIS FAR.

GONNA SEE IT THROUGH TO THE END—

GOT THAT RIGHT.

TAKE' EM!
GOT SOME AGGRESSION TO WORK OUT!
GUNN'S SLAYER PRISONERS. THEY WERE TRAPPED IN A LOOP, USED FOR TRAINING.

THEY MUST HAVE DIED A THOUSAND TIMES IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS. FOR ALL THEY KNOW, IT'S ONLY FIVE MINUTES AFTER THEY WERE KIDNAPPED.
SINCE THEN, THEY'VE HAD A BUILDING DROPPED ON THEM AND ARE FACE TO FACE WITH ILLYRIA, BUT THEY'RE HARDLY FAZED.
SHE'S TRAINED THEM WELL, THEY CAN HANDLE THE LACKEYS.
LEAVING ME FREE TO GO KILL WHAT'S LEFT OF ONE FRIEND.
BEFORE KILLING WHAT'S LEFT OF ANOTHER.
you stay there! you will not die, angel. not today.
quite frankly, we don't have the resources to reach into your timeline and pull out another body.
DON'T SEE ANY OTHER—
—CHOICE?

ANOTHER TIMESLIP.
APPEARS TO BE PERSONAL.
FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.
AND THE ONLY ONE LEFT—
—IS THE MVP.
ANGEL
ANGEL
THE STENCH OF BLOOD IS OVERWHELMING. IT'S EVERYWHERE. MAKING ME EUPHORIC.
THIS IS...
...THIS IS THRILLING. THIS IS PERFECT.
SHE WANTS ME TO SEE.
THIS IS MY FUTURE.
THIS IS WHAT I'M FIGHTING FOR.

I DID THIS. NOT WOLFRAM & HART. NOT ANGELUS. ALL ME.
BUT SHE CAN MAKE IT GO AWAY. SHE'S TRYING TO MAKE IT SO IT NEVER HAPPENS.
ALL THIS TIME, I DID WHAT I DID BECAUSE OF THE SHANSHU PROPHECY.
WELL.
ILLYRIA!
TIME TO START DOING WHAT I DO DESPITE IT.

UM. YES, ILLYRIA'S STILL THERE.
WELCOME BACK.
DID EVERYONE... SEE THAT?
HEY HEY, SOME OF WHAT'S LEFT OF THE GANG IS HEREISH. GHOST WESLEY, CHECK. FALL OF MAN, CHECK.
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M GOOD.
YOU'RE BLEEDING.
EVERYONE'S BLEEDING. WHAT'S THE PLAN?
ILLYRIA WANTS TO BRING IT ALL DOWN. I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO TRY AND DELAY THAT FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.
I'M FINE, TOO, THANKS FOR ASKING. ALRIGHT THEN, LET'S DO THIS.
WAIT—
YOU'RE AWARE THAT I LIKE FRED MORE THAN YOU AND YOU'RE AFRAID I'M GONNA STAB YOU INSTEAD OF HER.
IN A NUTSHELL, YES. KINDA ABSOLUTELY THAT.

I'VE SEEN IT ACT UP BEFORE. NOT TO THIS SCALE, MIND YOU. BUT I FIGURED, EVEN IF FRED'S GONE AND ONLY THE MONSTER IS LEFT...
...WELL, WE ALL KNOW THAT JUST BECAUSE IT'S A MONSTER DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULD READY THE PITCHFORKS AND TORCHES...
...BUT AFTER THIS, ALL THESE PEOPLE...
IT'S HARD, I KNOW—
I DIDN'T SAY IT WAS HARD. I'M DEALING WITH IT. WE'RE ALL CLEAR, THAT'S NOT FRED, FRED'S NOT HOMICIDAL, FRED'S SHORTER.
BLOODY HELL, DO YOU HAVE TO WHINE ABOUT EVERYTHING TO BE PART OF THIS CLUB? LET'S MAKE WITH THE BRAWLING.
I WANT WESLEY IN PLAIN VIEW. FRED OR NOT, ILLYRIA MIGHT HESITATE IF IT'S HIM, GIVE US SOME TIME.
I WANT TO BE ON THE FRONT LINE.
NO. WESLEY CAN'T BE HURT, YOU CAN. WE NEED YOU IN THIS FIGHT FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.
I TAKE THE LEAD. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE BACK-UP IN THE FORM OF WHATEVER'S LEFT OF WOLFRAM & HART'S ARMY AND THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO ME.
KILLING'S OUT OF THE QUESTION. NOT A QUESTION OF MORALS, JUST BEING REALISTIC. HACK AT WHAT YOU CAN, TENTACLES, MOUTH, WHATEVER THE HELL PASSES FOR EYES. IS THE DRAGON ANYWHERE NEARBY, BECAUSE WE COULD—
HE'S DEAD.

HE, UH...
...HE DIED SAVING ME. YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD.
OKAY, THEN. WE DO IT WITHOUT THE DRAGON. SAME PLAN LET'S GO—
—CUE THE MUSIC.

NO.
YOU'RE GOING TO LET HER DO WHAT SHE'S SUPPOSED TO DO! EVEN AFTER I BUILT THAT, THAT SHRINE TO RESTORE HER TO ORIGINAL FORM AND YOU, LIKE ALWAYS, WENT AND MADE IT ABOUT YOU, SHE DID IT ON HER OWN.
SHE DID WHAT I PLANNED ALL ALONG BECAUSE IT'S FATE. IT'S BEEN BUILDING TO THIS, I MADE IT HAPPEN, IT'S THE RIGHT THING—
—IT HAS TO BE.
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. YOU FANCY YOURSELF A HERO, YOU SAY YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, YOU HELP US.
AND THEN, IF THE SMOKE CLEARS, YOU CAN AIR YOUR GRIEVANCES WITH KNIVES, SWORDS, LASERS, YOUR PICK. BUT NOT NOW, GUNN. NOT NOW.
OOOPH
UKK—
NO, ANGEL.
NOW WOULD BE GOOD.
YOU DON'T TELL ME HOW IT'S GOING TO GO! YOU'RE WEAK! YOU'RE NOTHING!
AND THAT'S FOR THE WINDOW, KIDDO.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS. NOT NOW.
YES, I CAN. PRIORITIES JUST CHANGED, WESLEY.
DAMN RIGHT, HE CAN'T. THING OF IT IS, HE'S THE HUMAN NOW. I'M THE VAMP.
WORLD'S GOING TO END.
WORLD HAS JUST ENDED.
OH, MAN, THINGS ARE NOT LOOKING GOOD FOR TEAM ANGEL.
LET'S GO THEN, LET'S—
OOOOPH
HEH.
TANK! BACK UP!
CAN'T TELL IF THINGS ARE GOING HAZY BECAUSE OF ILLYRIA OR BECAUSE OF WHAT JUST HAPPENED.
DON'T CARE.

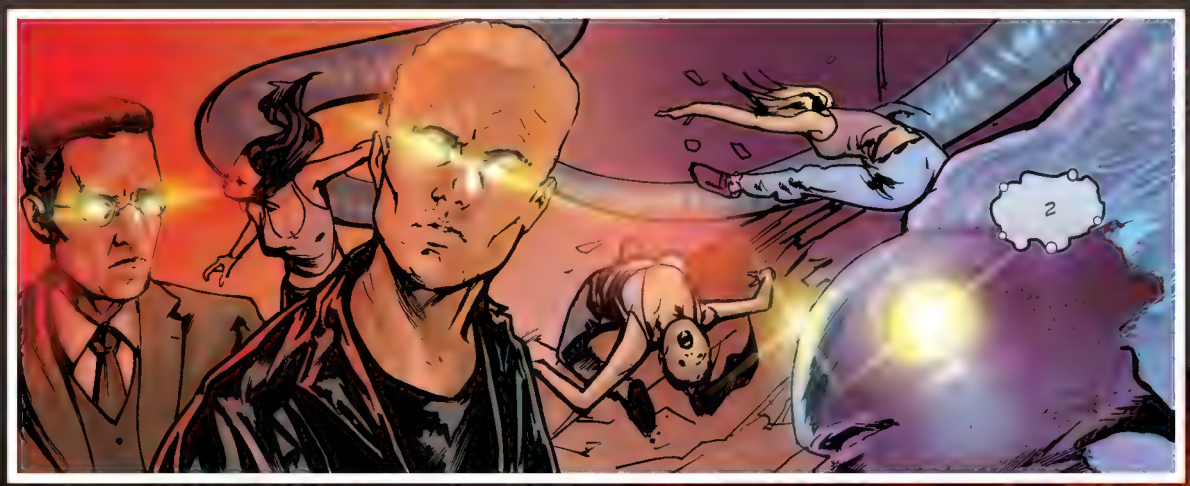
GAAAAA
I'M ON IT, GUNN—
BEEN WANTING TO GO ONE-ON-ONE WITH THIS ONE ANYWAY—
WORD OF ADVICE, "TANK," DON'T GO SAYING THAT KINDA THING OUT LOUD, PEOPLE WILL TWIST YOUR WORDS ALL SORTS OF WAYS.
GET IT OVER WITH, ANGEL, WE HAVE WORK TO DO.
ANGEL.

YOU COULD HAVE BEAT ME WHEN YOU WERE HUMAN, CHARLES.
YOU JUST HAD TO BE ANGRY ENOUGH.
DO IT THEN.
DO IT.
YOU HEARD HIM, DO IT. NOT BECAUSE IT WILL SAVE THE DAY. NOT BECAUSE IT'S RIGHT.
DO IT BECAUSE HE JUST MORTALLY WOUNDED YOUR SON.
SO HELP ME...
...THEY WERE RIGHT.
I COULD BECOME WHAT THEY NEED. IT'S IN ME.
KILL GUNN, KILL ILLYRIA

IT'S NOT EVEN GUNN. CLEARLY. NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE WANTS IT TO BE.
ILLYRIA HAS FOUND HER MOMENT.
NOT HER, WES. JUST LIKE GUNN, IT WAS NEVER FRED—
—NO MATTER HOW MUCH ILLYRIA WANTS IT TO BE.
CONNOR, I—
YOU HAVE AN IDEA. GOOD, GO, SAVE THE WORLD.
OKAY. YOU, THE FISH.
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? I'M A PRISONER! I STABBED NO ONE!
HIS NAME IS GEORGE.

BETTA GEORGE, ACTUALLY. WE GO WAY BACK.
WHAT, JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT THERE DOESN'T MEAN IT DIDN'T HAPPEN. I'M MATES WITH A TELEPATHIC FISH, YOU PRACTICALLY DATED A DRAGON, LET'S MOVE ON.
WHAT DO YOU NEED?
GO BACK INTO ILLYRIA'S HEAD.
ARE YOU KIDDING?! SHE WON'T LET ME OUT.
THAT'S GOOD. HOW POWERFUL ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU CAPABLE OF—
MORE THAN I THOUGHT. A WISE MAN TAUGHT ME THAT.
A WISE, PSYCHOPATHIC, TROUBLED, SUPER-CREEPY MAN.
I NEED YOU TO INUNDATE ILLYRIA WITH MEMORIES OF FRED.
IT'S ALREADY OVERFLOWING WITH THEM. WE'RE TALKING SERIOUS IDENTITY CRISIS—
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT ILLYRIA'S MEMORIES OF FRED.
I WANT YOU TO HIT HER WITH WESLEY'S.
EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM. LET'S GIVE ILLYRIA A CRASH COURSE.
IT'S...
...IT'S A SOLID PLAN.

BUT...
...YOU SHOULD USE SPIKE'S MEMORIES OF FRED AS WELL. ROOT AROUND, FIND EVERY THOUGHT REMOTELY RELATED TO FRED. EVEN THE MORE QUESTIONABLE ONES.
HA. GIVE ME SOMETHING DIFFICULT. FRED'S FRONT AND CENTER WITHIN BOTH OF YOU.
OKAY, LOST LOVE CARE BEAR STARE IN 3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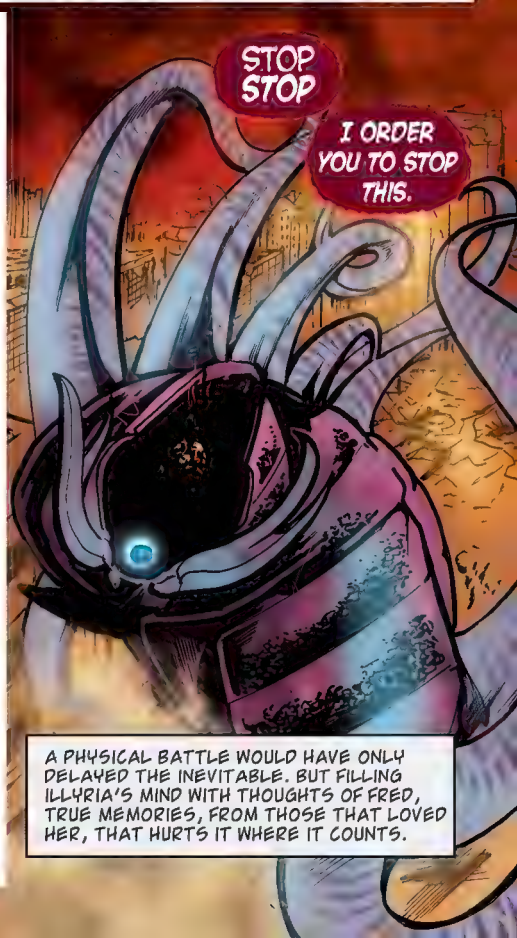
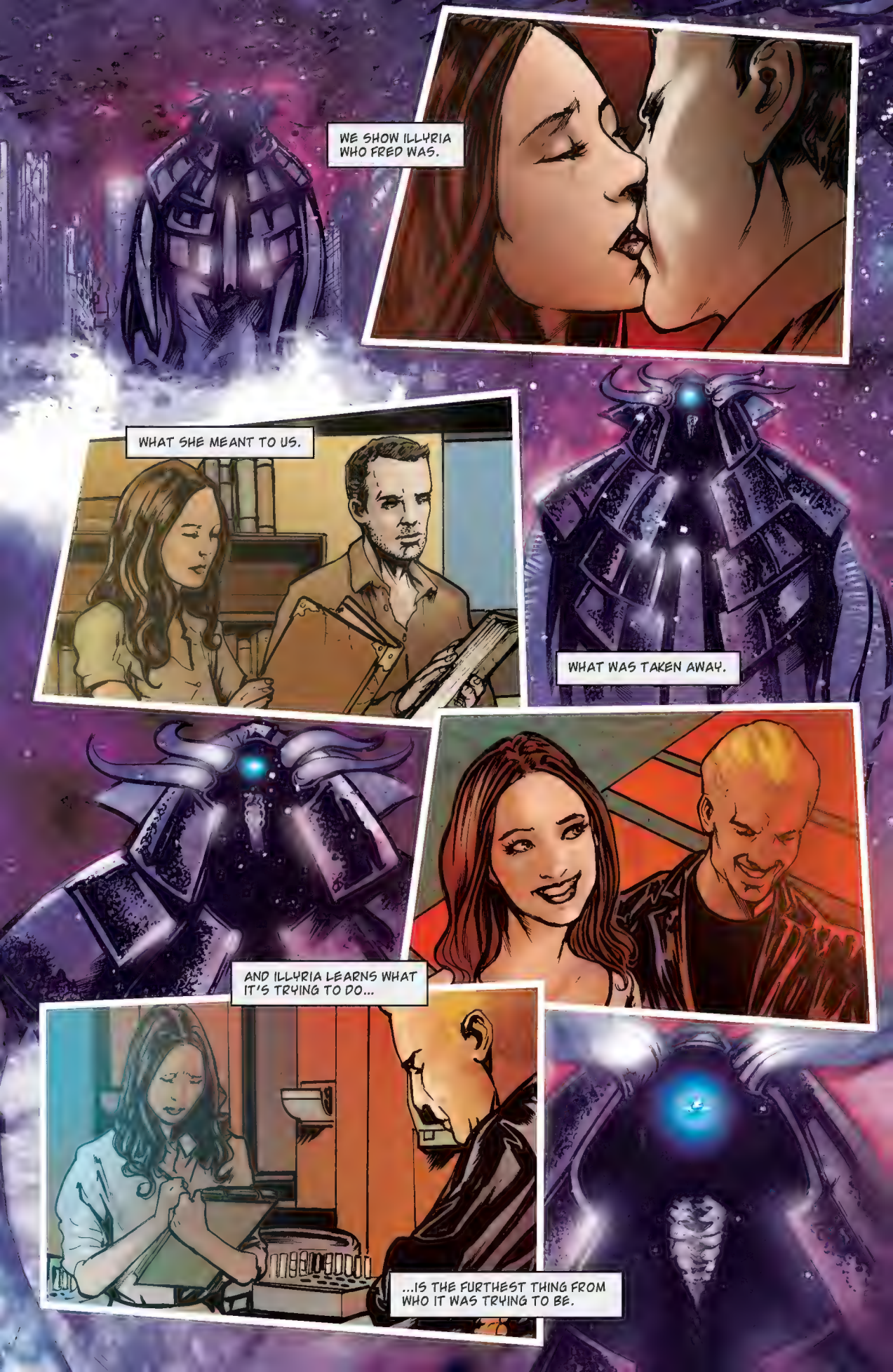
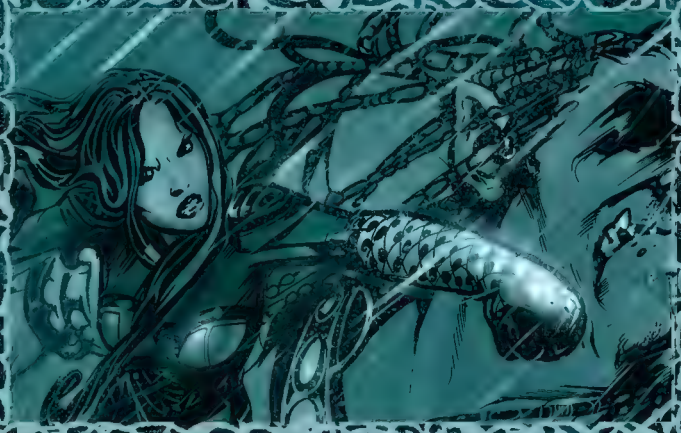

STOP
STOP
I ORDER YOU TO STOP THIS.
A PHYSICAL BATTLE WOULD HAVE ONLY DELAYED THE INEVITABLE. BUT FILLING ILLYRIA'S MIND WITH THOUGHTS OF FRED, TRUE MEMORIES, FROM THOSE THAT LOVED HER, THAT HURTS IT WHERE IT COUNTS.


WE SHOW ILLYRIA WHO FRED WAS.
WHAT SHE MEANT TO US.
WHAT WAS TAKEN AWAY.
AND ILLYRIA LEARNS WHAT IT'S TRYING TO DO...
...IS THE FURTHEST THING FROM WHO IT WAS TRYING TO BE.

A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS...
...AND THAT'S ALL WOLFRAM & HART NEEDS TO BRING IT DOWN.
I DON'T SEE ILLYRIA FALL.
YOU DID IT. WITH LIMITED BLOODSHED. GO TEAM DAD.
YOU'RE NOT—
YEAH. YES, SIR, I AM.

YOU SAVED ME SO MANY TIMES, CONNOR. EVEN BEFORE EVERYTHING WENT TO HELL. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU MEAN TO ME.
I HAVE AN IDEA.
I NEED YOU TO PROMISE ME SOMETHING.
AND YOU GOTTA DO IT, BECAUSE IT'S LIKE, A LAST REQUEST.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, ANGEL, DON'T LET THEM WIN. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.
VAMPIRE OR NOT—
—YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.



chapter four

WE SPEND MOST OF OUR LIVES TRYING TO FIND OUR ONE TRUE LOVE.
I FOUND MINE. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE, IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN, BUT I FOUND MINE.
NOW HE'S GONE.
MY SON IS DEAD.

BULLETS, SWORD THROUGH THE CHEST, LOSING MY SOUL—
—I THOUGHT I KNEW PAIN.
I'M SO SORRY, CONNOR.
ANGEL?
ANGEL—?
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!
GIVE HIM ROOM TO BREATHE, THE MAN IS MOURNING.
ANGEL, WE HAVE TO—
NOT NOW.
LET THEM BE.
alright, then. not what we were expecting, but it was going to happen eventually. kinda has to, no?
THEY'VE WON.
anyway, point made? point made.
here's what happens now. you go home.
I WANT TO END THEM ALL, EVERY SINGLE ONE. BUT IT WILL JUST MAKE THINGS WORSE.
the hotel is standing, somewhat. we're fine with that being your base of operations.

don't worry about the offspring. we will send the carcass over asap. do you want it spruced up? cleaned? we can find a nice suit.
KILLING THEM WON'T BRING MY SON BACK. WON'T MAKE GUNN WHOLE. WON'T HELP ILLYRIA.
IT WON'T SAVE LOS ANGELES.
BUT I WANT A BLOODBATH. I WANT THEM TO SUFFER.
HE HAS TO STOP.
WHY? LET 'IM WORK OUT SOME AGGRESSION. THEY CAN'T KILL HIM. THEY'D GET DOCKED PAY OR SOME NONSENSE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, THEY CAN'T—
—THEY CAN'T KILL YOU.

YOU WON'T LET HIM GO. HE DIES, THIS IS ALL FOR NOTHING. YOU CAN KILL EVERYONE IMPORTANT TO HIM, YOU CAN SLAUGHTER EVERY LIVING BEING IN THE CITY, BUT ANGEL HAS TO STICK AROUND.
well. sure.
angel won't die.
the minute he has so much as sniffles we'll simply pull a better him out of the timeline.
but seriously, angel, if this makes you feel better, chop away at the minions. we'll make more.
ARE YOU HEARING THIS, ANGEL? THEY'LL REACH INTO YOUR TIMELINE.
GOTCHA.
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
AND IF WE'RE WRONG, THEN IT'S OVER ANYWAY, NO? GOING TO HAVE TO BE FAST.
THAT'S FOR SURE. WHAT... WHAT IS?
THE SLAYERS?
I'M THINKING GUNN. EITHER WAY, IF IT WORKS OR IF IT DOESN'T, YOU'RE—
ANGEL.
BEING YOUR FRIEND AND FIGHTING BY YOUR SIDE HAS BEEN AN HONOR.
NOW GO.
THANK YOU, ROGUE DEMON HUNTER.

WHAT'S ALL THAT ABOUT? IF HE WASN'T SEE-THROUGH, YOU WOULD HAVE KISSED, WOULDN'T YOU? I GOT THAT VIBE.
SPIKE, I NEED YOU TO KEEP THE ARMY BACK.
WHY?
CAN'T SAY IT OUT LOUD. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TRUST ME.
THAT'S HILARIOUS.
what is he doing? *angel*, that is *not* the direction of the Hyperion.
MAN WANTS ME TO HOLD AN ARMY BACK, I CAN DO THAT. SLAYERS, GEORGE, GONNA NEED BACK-UP!
LINE IN THE SAND, UNSTOPPABLE ARMY. CROSS IT *IF YOU DARE*.
GET UP.

YOUR PLAN DIDN'T WORK. THE VISIONS LIED. CONNOR IS DEAD.
BECAUSE OF YOU. BUT I'LL MAKE IT RIGHT.
I KNOW YOU WILL.
NNNN
stop it
ANGEL—
stop him
—THEY DARE! MANY IF NOT ALL OF THEM ARE BLOODY WELL DARING! THE MEN UPSTAIRS REALLY DON'T WANT YOU TO DO WHAT YOU'RE DOING—
I'M NOT GOING TO DO IT, ANGEL. THERE'S A REASON IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU.
YOU'RE CAUSE AND EFFECT ALL ROLLED UP IN ONE.

BRINGING THE SKY DOWN ON TOP OF US.
THEY KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.
ALL HOPE IS LOST, IS THAT IT?!
ALL SIGNS POINT TO YOU BEING A FAILURE SO YOU'RE PACKING IT IN?
YOU WERE LIED TO! YOUR WORLD ENDED! YOU'RE BEATEN AND YOU'RE TIRED AND YOUR FUTURE IS HOPELESS!
stop it
you know what this will cost you
THAT'S WHEN YOU STAND UP.
THAT'S WHEN YOU FIGHT BACK.
RISE UP, CHARLES.

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
"TWO SECONDS AFTER ANGEL FIGURES IT OUT...
...ANGEL DIES."
THERE WE GO.
IT TOOK THE DEATH OF MY SON TO GET US TO THIS POINT.
I LOVE CONNOR.
I LOVE MY FRIENDS AND I LOVE THIS CITY.
I'D DIE A THOUSAND DEATHS TO SAVE ANY OF THEM.

BUT I THINK I'M ONLY
GOING TO HAVE DIE ONC

you...
I KNOW.
you ruined it—
I DID IT!
WHAT THE HELL IS *THAT*? WHAT THE HELL IS *THAT*?
WE'RE TRAPPED BETWEEN MOMENTS AS PART OF A PLAN TO MANIPULATE ANGEL.
HE'S ABOUT TO DIE, THEY HEAL HIM. THEY NEED TO PULL HIM OUT OF HIS TIMELINE.
ANGEL ENDED HIS TIMELINE.
SO IF THEY WANT HIM FOR HIS HORRIBLY EVER AFTER—
—THEY NEED TO RETURN TO THE VERY LAST MOMENT BEFORE ALL OF THIS STARTED.
EXACTLY HOW IT WAS. EXACTLY AS WE WERE.
BUT YOU WERE—
YES. BUT SO WAS SHE.

I'D TELL YOU TO KEEP AN EYE ON OUR MUTUAL FRIEND. MAKE SURE SHE STAYS ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW.
BUT I HAVE A HUNCH YOU WILL.
WE BOTH WILL, IN A MATTER OF SPEAKING. WHETHER SHE LIKES IT OR NOT.
WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU—
—GOING?
IT'S LIKE THAT, THEN.

SO DO I.
IT ALL HAPPENED IN A DAMN MOMENT? WE WERE THERE FOR MONTHS. I REMEMBER IT ALL.
ILLYRIA. HAVE YOU LOST WEIGHT?
SEE, BECAUSE—
BECAUSE I WAS A MASSIVE CREATURE. I UNDERSTAND. IT WAS A MARGINALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT AT HUMOR.
THANK YOU?
DID ILLYRIA JUST GET A JOKE? DID SHE FINALLY APPRECIATE A PITHY COMMENT? WHOLE WORLD'S GONE TO HELL.
OR BACK FROM HELL, AS THE CASE MAY BE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, THEN? HANGING IN THERE?

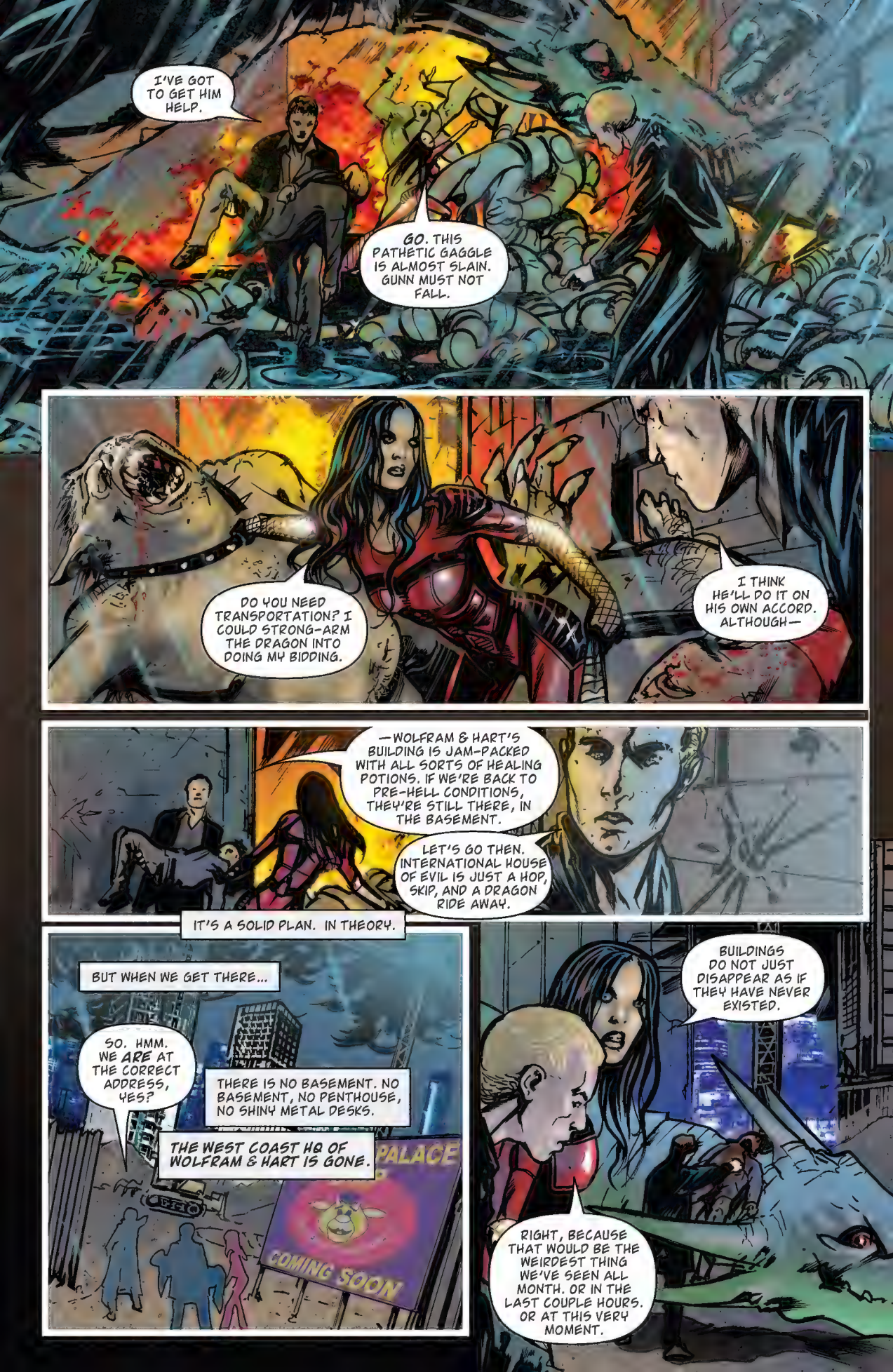
I'LL LIVE.

HE WAS RIGHT.
WESLEY WAS RIGHT.
KILL ME, GAME OVER. THEY LOSE THEIR KEY CHESS PIECE.
I DIE IN THE HELL, THEY CAN NEVER RETURN ME TO THE NORMAL TIMELINE AND FULFILL WHAT THEY CONSIDER MY DESTINY.
NO CHOICE BUT TO RETURN TO THE LAST MOMENT I WAS IN ONE PIECE.
WESLEY, AS USUAL, HELPED ME TO WIN THE DAY. AND ALL I HAD TO DO—
—WAS FIND A WAY TO RETURN TO A WORLD WITHOUT HIM.
WESLEY'S GONE. HE'S NOT COMING BACK.
BUT DESPITE THE PHYSICAL REBOOT, IT HAPPENED. IT ALL HAPPENED. I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
WE REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
I CAN'T GET HIM OUT. HE'S IN MY HEAD, WHAT SHE WAS TO HIM, WHAT SHE MEANT TO HIM.
SHE... SHE WAS HIS REASON FOR BEING. SHE WAS HIS LIGHT.
AND I ENDED IT.

SHE'S NEVER BEEN LIKE THIS. NEVER THIS PASSIONATE. ALMOST—
HUMAN. SHE'S ACTING BLOODY HUMAN.
SHE'S... WORKING THROUGH SOME ISSUES. I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR WOLFRAM & HART'S ARMY. ILLYRIA COULD END THIS BRAWL ALL BY HERSELF.
THAT SAID—
SNURT
—SHE WON'T HAVE TO.

THEY CAN HANDLE THIS. GOTTA FIND THE SCENT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
HEY, ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR GIRLFRIENDS IS RESURRECTED.
IGNORE THE RAIN, SWEAT, AND BURNING DEMON.
FIND THE ONLY HUMAN IN THE ALLEYWAY.
SPIKE—
GOT THESE, GO!
STILL HUMAN. SCENT IS SO STRONG—
—HIS BLOOD IS EVERYWHERE.
ANGEL

BACK AWAY, BROTHER! WE'RE GOING TO DO IT RIGHT THIS TIME. WE HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE!
I WON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW WHAT?
NEVER MIND. DON'T CARE.
NO.
LEAVE ME BE.
PLEASE, LET ME DIE.
SORRY, CHARLES.
IT'S NOT THAT EASY.


I'VE GOT TO GET HIM HELP.
GO. THIS PATHETIC GAGGLE IS ALMOST SLAIN. GUNN MUST NOT FALL.
DO YOU NEED TRANSPORTATION? I COULD STRONG-ARM THE DRAGON INTO DOING MY BIDDING.
I THINK HE'LL DO IT ON HIS OWN ACCORD. ALTHOUGH—
—WOLFRAM & HART'S BUILDING IS JAM-PACKED WITH ALL SORTS OF HEALING POTIONS. IF WE'RE BACK TO PRE-HELL CONDITIONS, THEY'RE STILL THERE, IN THE BASEMENT.
LET'S GO THEN. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF EVIL IS JUST A HOP, SKIP, AND A DRAGON RIDE AWAY.
IT'S A SOLID PLAN. IN THEORY.
BUT WHEN WE GET THERE...
SO. HMM. WE ARE AT THE CORRECT ADDRESS, YES?
THERE IS NO BASEMENT. NO BASEMENT, NO PENTHOUSE, NO SHINY METAL DESKS.
THE WEST COAST HQ OF WOLFRAM & HART IS GONE.
PALACE
COMING SOON
BUILDINGS DO NOT JUST DISAPPEAR AS IF THEY HAVE NEVER EXISTED.
RIGHT, BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE THE WEIRDEST THING WE'VE SEEN ALL MONTH. OR IN THE LAST COUPLE HOURS. OR AT THIS VERY MOMENT.

IT'S ALL BACK TO NORMAL. MYSELF INCLUDED.
WHENEVER I FLEW ON THE DRAGON, EACH AND EVERY TIME, I COULD FEEL MY HEART RACE.
I MISSED THAT FEELING THE MOMENT WE TOOK OFF.
LUCKILY THE HOSPITAL IS ONLY A FEW BLOCKS AWAY.
EMERGENC
ON A NORMAL NIGHT, AT THIS HOUR, THE EMERGENCY ROOM WOULD BE QUIET.
ON A NORMAL NIGHT.
WE WERE IN HELL, RIGHT? AM I CRAZY?
I WAS THERE, TOO.
JUST CALLED MY MOM IN SAN DIEGO, SHE SAID I WAS NUTS.
I MADE FRIENDS IN HELL, AND NOW I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THEY ARE—
HEY, LOOK.
SOMEBODY HELP, PLEASE—
WHAT HAPPENED?
HE WAS ATTACKED... BY AN ANIMAL. MANY LARGE ANIMALS.
DID SOME OF THEM HAVE SWORDS?
NOT SURE, IT WAS DARK.

WE NEED TO MOVE HIM TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE, GET HIM INTO SURGERY.
IS HE GOING TO BE OKAY?
WE'LL DO OUR BEST—
—IS THERE ANYTHING WE SHOULD KNOW? WAS IT A DEMON? VAMPIRE, WHAT?
I'M SORRY?
Reception
Surgery
IT SEEMS LIKE ALL THE NASTIES STAYED WHEREVER THE HELL WE WERE, AND IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYTHING'S BACK TO NORMAL, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT COULD SLIP THROUGH THE CRACKS, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN? WELL, OF COURSE, YOU DO—
I'M NOT SURE I, UH...
...I REALLY NEED SOME AIR.

SO, HEY.
SAW THE DRAGON. NOT DEAD ANYMORE, THAT RULES.
SPEAKING OF... I'M ALSO CONSIDERABLY LESS DEAD, AND LOS ANGELES IS SAVED, WAS THAT YOU?
LOOK WHO I'M TALKING TO, OF COURSE IT WAS.
IT'S OKAY, DAD. IT'S OKAY.
IN FACT, IT'S KIND OF A HAPPY ENDING, ISN'T IT?
I'M NOT SURE...
...I'VE NEVER HAD ONE BEFORE.

SORRY, DON'T MEAN TO SMOTHER YOU, I'M JUST...
I KNOW.

ANGEL!
UH-HUH.
DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT WHATEVER THIS IS... BUT WHEN AM I GOING TO HAVE THIS CHANCE AGAIN, YOU KNOW? WANTED TO SAY THANK YOU.

DO I KNOW YOU?
I SAW YOU IN ACTION, BACK... A WHILE AGO. I WAS A SLAVE. FOR BURGE, HE'S THE ONE WITH THE LOBSTER CLAWS. ANYWAY, BURGE MADE US GO TO THE BATTLE WITH THE DINOSAUR AND THE EXPLODING AND WHAT-HAVE-YOU. YOU, UH, YOU FREED ME.
HEH, YOU FREED EVERYONE.

I THINK YOU HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH—
AW, IT'S YOU, I'M SURE. YOU NEVER FORGET THE GUY WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE. WANNA HEAR SOMETHING NUTS?
DO I?

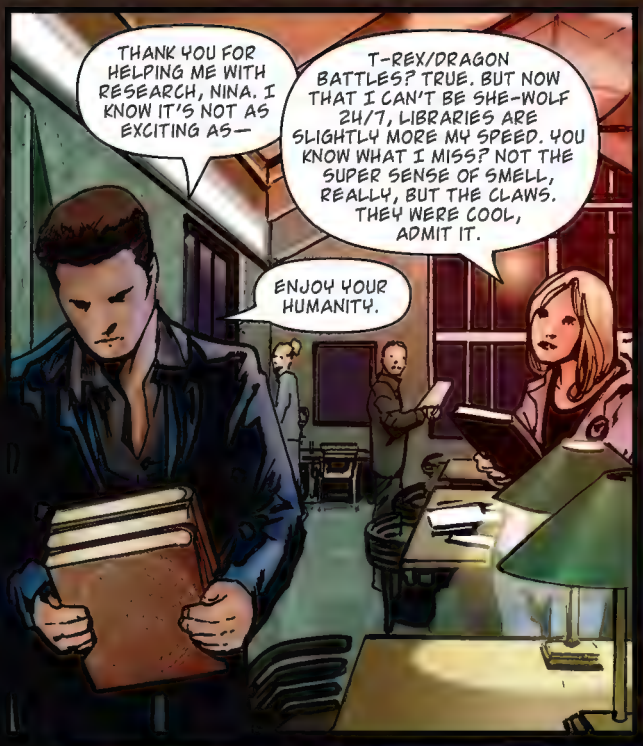
SINCE THE DAY OF THAT RUMBLE, MOST EVERYONE I MET, THEY CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN YOU IN ACTION, BUT THERE WAS NO WAY ***EVERYONE*** COULD HAVE SEEN THAT FIGHT, THERE WERE ONLY A FEW THOUSAND THERE. ***EVERYONE*** WANTS TO SAY THEY KNOW ANGEL, YOU KNOW?
"EVERYONE WANTS TO SAY"—?

OH. THIS IS NOT GOOD.
THIS IS BIG.
THIS IS NOT GOOD.
NAH, IT'S FINE YOU JUST MOVED ON UP.
FROM URBAN LEGEND—
REMEMBER WHEN I SAID LOS ANGELES WAS BACK TO NORMAL?
—TO JUST PLAIN LEGEND.
YOU TOTALLY DESERVE IT, TOO. GOOD FOR YOU, DAD.
I WAS WRONG. I WAS VERY, VERY WRONG.
DO YOU MIND A QUICK PICTURE? NOBODY'S GONNA BELIEVE ME OTHERWISE.

chapter five

ONE MONTH LATER.
WOLFRAM & HART HAS BEEN THE BANE OF MY EXISTENCE SINCE I MOVED TO LOS ANGELES.
BUT TIMES CHANGE. THEIR LOS ANGELES BRANCH HAS DISAPPEARED.
AND STRANGER STILL—
ACCORDING TO RECORDS, THAT LOT HAS BEEN CITY-OWNED FOR DECADES. THERE WAS A REHAB CENTER ON THAT LOCATION UNTIL THE EARTHQUAKE OF '94 DECIMATED IT. IT'S BEEN EMPTY EVER SINCE.
THERE WAS A BUILDING ON THAT SPOT A MONTH AGO.
I WORKED THERE. I LIVED THERE.
OH, I'M NOT DOUBTING YOU, ANGEL. DO YOU SUSPECT—
—DEMON FOUL PLAY?
OH, GOOD. SHE KNOWS ME.
ALRIGHT THEN, THANK YOU—
DO YOU WANT TO TEAM UP AND SOLVE THE CASE OF THE MISSING BUILDING? OR MAYBE JUST GET SOMETHING TO EAT? DO YOU EAT? I CAN DO WHATEVER, I'M FLEXIBLE.
LIKE I SAID, TIMES CHANGE.

LATER THAT NIGHT, ACROSS TOWN.
SPILL YOUR GUTS AND GIVE A HEARTFELT SPEECH IN FRONT OF ONE LITTLE MOB, AND THEN FIGHT A T-REX WITH YOUR DRAGON IN FRONT OF SAID MOB, AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE A MINOR CELEBRITY.


THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME WITH RESEARCH, NINA. I KNOW IT'S NOT AS EXCITING AS—
T-REX/DRAGON BATTLES? TRUE. BUT NOW THAT I CAN'T BE SHE-WOLF 24/7, LIBRARIES ARE SLIGHTLY MORE MY SPEED. YOU KNOW WHAT I MISS? NOT THE SUPER SENSE OF SMELL, REALLY, BUT THE CLAWS. THEY WERE COOL, ADMIT IT.
ENJOY YOUR HUMANITY.

DO THEY ALWAYS JUST... STARE?

NAH, SOME SAY HELLO. SOME HAND ME WADS OF CASH. I'M NOT BRAGGING. I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT.
THE LAST THING I WANT MORE IS ATTENTION.
WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, LED TO SOME SERIOUS LIFESTYLE CHANGES...
YOU'LL LIKE GROOSALUGG. HE FREED YOU DURING THE BATTLE WITH THE LORD'S CHAMPIONS, REMEMBER? THAT WAS NICE OF HIM.
AND, UM, YOU BOTH RECENTLY DIED AND GOT RESURRECTED SO YOU HAVE THAT IN COMMON.

IT'S WHAT'S BEST FOR EVERYONE, RIGHT? I CAN'T BE INCOGNITO ON THE BACK OF A GIANT DRAGON. BESIDES, EVERYONE STARING AT ME, EVENTUALLY, SOMEONE'S GOTTA WONDER ABOUT THE GIANT DRAGON STANDING BEHIND ME. THAT COULD ONLY LEAD TO, YOU KNOW, GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION OR DISSECTION OR WORSE. BUT GROO, DON'T...
...HE'S NOT A PET. HE'S A PARTNER, OKAY? DON'T TALK DOWN TO HIM, HE'S SMART.
OF COURSE. DOES HE HAVE A NAME?
YES, IT'S—
—CORDELIA.
MY.
GROOSALUGG HAS TWO CORDYS.
SORRY, STRAYED OFF-TOPIC FOR A MOMENT.
LET'S LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITIES: WOLFRAM & HART COULD HAVE EXHAUSTED THEIR POWER OR THEIR CASHFLOW. MAYBE BOTH. THE TRIP TO HELL DID TAP THEM, THEY SAID SO BEFORE WE LEFT.
WELL, IF THE ONLY THING THAT'S DIFFERENT WITH LA IS WOLFRAM & HART IS GONE, I SAY IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORTH THE TRIP TO HECK.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IN THE TOWN. PEOPLE'S EYES HAVE BEEN OPENED.

I GET IT, SUPERSTAR, YOU'RE A CELEBRITY.

MOST PEOPLE WANT TO RESUME THE LIFE THEY HAD, AND FORGET WHAT THEY SAW...

...BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. WE REMEMBER EVERY MOMENT. EVERY DECISION, EVERY ACTION.

NO, NOT THAT. THE ENTIRE CITY TOOK UP RESIDENCE IN HELL.

THERE IS NO GOING BACK.

PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ME.

NOBODY CAN TOUCH ME.

WE'RE ALL CHANGED.

EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE FIGHT IT.
SOOO WHAT DID THAT HAVE TO DO WITH—
NOT A THING, IT'S LATE AND I'M RAMBLING.
MAYBE WE SHOULD WRAP UP FOR THE NIGHT.
GOOD NIGHT, ANGEL.
SORRY I COULDN'T BE MORE HELP. NEVER WAS THAT GREAT AT RESEARCH.
HEY, IT'S NOT MY STRONG SUIT EITHER.
LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY
Burkle Wyndam-Pryce
WING
IT'S JUST SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO NOW.
GOODNIGHT, FRED. GOODNIGHT, WES.

MY GHOST IS GONE.
IT WAS THE PRICE WE PAID FOR RETURNING THINGS TO NORMAL. WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT WOLFRAM & HART HAD IN MIND. SO EVEN IF WE WON, IT FELT LIKE A DEFEAT.
I MISS THEM.
EVERY DAY, I MISS THEM.
EVERY TIME I THINK OF THEM, I HOPE FOR THE SAME THING.
LET THEM BE TOGETHER. WHEREVER THEY ARE, THEY'VE EARNED IT. THEY DESERVE IT.
AND THEN THE DOUBT SETS IN. THEY CAN'T BE TOGETHER. IT DEFIES LOGIC. IT WOULD GO AGAINST WHAT WE WERE TOLD.
BUT THEN.
WARM BREEZE. EACH AND EVERY TIME.
SHE HATES WHEN I'M PESSIMISTIC.

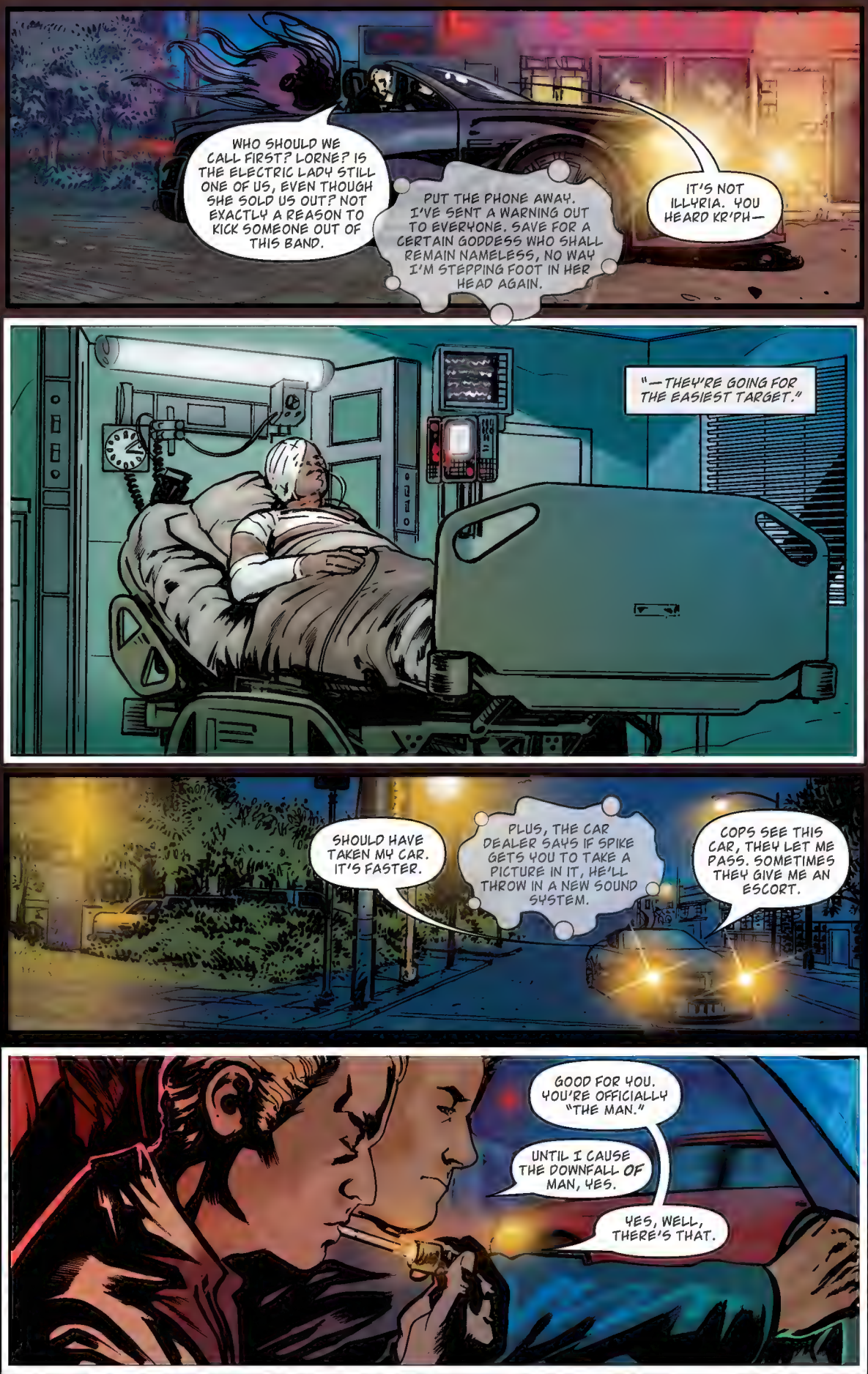
WONDERFUL. I THINK THE WIND IS TALKING TO ME. THAT'S AMAZING.
PROBLEM AT HAND, STICK TO THE PROBLEM AT HAND. WOLFRAM & HART IS GONE AND I DON'T KNOW WHY.
SPIKE SAID HE WAS GOING TO LOOK INTO IT, I SHOULD CHECK IN.
FOR ALL I KNOW, HE'S SOLVED THE CASE ALREADY AND I'M WASTING MY TIME.
OOOOPH—
LEARN THE SITUATION, BLOOD-ADDICT MONGREL!
I WAS A LORD IN THE HELL MOMENT! LORDS HAVE SLAVES! IT'S ELEMENTARY LORDING, CONSULT A MANUAL!
YOU ENSLAVED A MATE OF MINE, MATE.
SPIKE! WATCH YOUR BACK!
CHEERS, GEORGE.

YOU'RE SURE THIS IS THE GIT THAT CHAINED YOU UP—
KR'PH WAS THE FIRST WHATEVER-YOU-SAID THAT CHAINED ME UP, YEAH.
EYEBALL THE SPLENDEN BEAST FOR A MOMENT! HE'S A FLYING FISH WHAT BRAIN-YELLS! WHO WOULDN'T DESIRE TO OWN ONE?
JELL-O'S GOT A POINT, GEORGE. THE PROPER ADVERTISING AND YOU COULD BE NEXT YEAR'S NUMBER-ONE CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE ITEM.
HILARIOUS, BUT MAYBE A LITTLE RESPECT IS IN ORDER. THIS HANDSOME FISH DID SAVE LOS ANGELES.
OR DOES SOMEONE NOT REMEMBER WHEN I BROUGHT DOWN ILL—
DON'T SAY ITS NAME.
SORRY, MAN, WASN'T THINKING.
THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA GOES WALKING AND WHEN SHE PASSES
ONE SECOND, FELLAS.
WHAT?
DRINKING TEA, LISTENING TO RECORDS, WHY?
I SUPPOSE.

WE HAVE TO GO.
ANGEL CALLS, YES?
ENJOY HIM WHILE HE LASTS. HIS FINALE, IT'S COMING.
WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?
IT'S STRANGE. EVER SINCE HELL, SPIKE AND I HAVE CEASED WITH THE BIG BROTHER/LITTLE BROTHER, "I SAW HER FIRST" BICKERING.
THERE'S A NEWFOUND UNSPOKEN ACCEPTANCE OF MUTUAL RESPECT.
GOTTA ADMIT, IT'S NICE.
THERE HE IS! CAPTAIN BIG BORE, RE-VAMPED! HOW'S THE FUTURE FALL OF CIVILIZATION DOING ON THIS FINE EVENING?
LOOK AT YOUR GREAT BIG CAR, LITTLE GUY. HOW MANY PHONE BOOKS ARE YOU SITTING ON?
IT'S VERY WELL HIDDEN BUT IT'S NICE.

SO YOU GOT A...
FREE CAR FOR HELPING SAVE THE CITY, INDEED. WE WERE DRAGGED THROUGH HELL—ENJOY THE FRUITS OF YOUR BEHEADING EVERY NOW AND THEN.
I WAS FINE WITH THE LIBRARY DEDICATION.
YEAH, GOTTA ADMIT, THAT TUGGED AT THE HEARTSTRINGS. THINK I COULD GET A STREET NAMED AFTER ME?
IN A TERRIBLE PART OF TOWN, MAYBE. HAVE YOU HEARD FROM CONNOR?
FIVE SECONDS BEFORE MENTIONING THE KID, YOU'RE GETTING BETTER. NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM. LAD'S GOT A LOT TO SORT OUT. BUT DON'T WORRY, WE'VE RAISED HIM WELL. GEORGE, DID YOU MESS WITH THE TRUNK LOCK?
I DON'T HAVE HANDS. THIS CAR IS CRAP. YOU SAVED THE TOWN AND YOU GOT FREE CRAP.
SO, MUTT, JEFF... ANY LEADS ON WOLFRAM & HART?
OH, A BIG ONE. THEY'RE NOT HERE ANYMORE, ANGEL. OBVIOUS WHAT HAPPENED. EVIL INVESTED ITS RESOURCES TRYING TO BREAK YOU, EVIL FAILED. YOU WON, CRACK A DAMNED SMILE. EVEN EMO ALBUMS HAVE A FEW PEPPY SONGS.
BESIDES, YOU HAVE OTHER FISH TO FRY.
RACIST. SO RACIST.

THERE WE GO.
I AM UNABLE TO BREATHE! UNTRUNK ME!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BREATHE, JELLY BEAN. THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF BEING WHATEVER THE HELL YOU ARE.
BUT, I PROMISE I'LL UNTRUNK YOU AS SOON AS YOU TELL ANGEL WHAT YOU TOLD ME.
INDEED, YES, BLOODSUCKER. ANGEL BROKE THE OTHER LORDS! BUT THEN POOF, HELL'S OVER, LORDS GUNNING EVEN STEVEN!
WOW, THAT IS...
...UM, WHAT?
I'LL BREAK IT DOWN. YOU EXPLODED A HALF-DOZEN OF THE MOST POWERFUL DEMONS IN LOS ANGELES. BUT SINCE EVERYTHING GOT A PHYSICAL REBOOT, THEY'RE UP AND ABOUT AND LOOKING TO RETURN THE FAVOR, VENGEFUL LORD STYLE.
HE DIDN'T TELL ME THAT LAST PART.
I FIGURED, SURE. WELL, KR'PH, YOU TELL THE LORDS MY DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN—
"STARTING WITH THE EASIEST KILL." I THINK WE NEED—
BAH! EVERYONE KNOWS, HITTING YOU, THAT'S NOTHING. YOU HURT YOURSELF MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE EVER COULD. TO MAKE ANGEL REALLY ACHE, YOU STRIKE THE ONES HE LOVES AND THEY'RE STARTING WITH THE EASIEST KILL! ***NOW UNTRUNK ME***, A DEAL IS LITERALLY A DEAL!
—WE NEED TO GO, RIGHT ON, I'LL DRIVE.


WHO SHOULD WE CALL FIRST? LORNE? IS THE ELECTRIC LADY STILL ONE OF US, EVEN THOUGH SHE SOLD US OUT? NOT EXACTLY A REASON TO KICK SOMEONE OUT OF THIS BAND.
PUT THE PHONE AWAY. I'VE SENT A WARNING OUT TO EVERYONE. SAVE FOR A CERTAIN GODDESS WHO SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS, NO WAY I'M STEPPING FOOT IN HER HEAD AGAIN.
IT'S NOT ILLYRIA. YOU HEARD KR'PH—
"—THEY'RE GOING FOR THE EASIEST TARGET."
SHOULD HAVE TAKEN MY CAR. IT'S FASTER.
PLUS, THE CAR DEALER SAYS IF SPIKE GETS YOU TO TAKE A PICTURE IN IT, HE'LL THROW IN A NEW SOUND SYSTEM.
COPS SEE THIS CAR, THEY LET ME PASS. SOMETIMES THEY GIVE ME AN ESCORT.
GOOD FOR YOU. YOU'RE OFFICIALLY "THE MAN."
UNTIL I CAUSE THE DOWNFALL OF MAN, YES.
YES, WELL, THERE'S THAT.

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, AND YOU BROUGHT IT UP, WHY DO YOU GET THE HANDSOME REWARD?
HERE IT COMES.
THINK ABOUT IT. WOLFRAM & HART IS CERTAIN YOUR DESTINY IS TO BE THEIR GOLDEN BOY IN THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.
YOU'RE GONNA SELL OUT THE SIDE OF GOOD AND GET SHANSHUED FOR YOUR TROUBLES AND EVERYONE ELSE, PROBABLY INCLUDING ME, WILL BE DUST OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, HURT AND ANNOYED.
PROBABLY DUST, SURE.
SO WEIH CASH THEIR CHIPS, SEND AN ENTIRE CITY TO HADES WITH ME IN IT, THEY TWIST TIME AND CREATE A GLAMOUR THAT DROPS A CURTAIN OVER THE WHOLE ORDEAL SO NO ONE CAN HELP ME.
TO TOP IT ALL OFF, THEY CREATE A TEMPORARY SHANSHU TO MAKE YOU HUMAN. YOU CAN EAT AND BREATHE AND GET FAT WHILE THE REST OF US RUN AROUND AND GET BEATEN AND HEARTBROKEN AND HAVE SEX WITH SPIDERS.
SO IF IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN ANYWAY, WHY PUT ME THROUGH ALL THAT BLOODY TROUBLE?
AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, IF IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN ANYWAY, WHY PUT YOU THROUGH ALL THAT BLOODY TROUBLE?
MAYBE YOUR DESTINY IS SLIGHTLY LESS THAN CERTAIN. IS IT ALRIGHT TO SMOKE IN HERE?
YEAH.

COULD BE ME, YOU KNOW. I COULD BE THE SHANSHU. I KNOW I'M NOT TECHNICALLY IN THE HISTORY BOOKS OR VISIONS BUT MAYBE THAT'S BECAUSE I WANTED IT THAT WAY. MAYBE FUTURE-ME DOESN'T WANT THE FAME AND THE HASSLE OF THE PAPARAZZI.
FUNNY THING ABOUT GOING UNNOTICED BY HISTORY BOOKS, OR VISIONS—
—WHATEVER YOU DO, WHATEVER PATH YOU TAKE, GOOD, BAD—
—NO ONE'S GONNA SEE YOU COMING.
YOU JUST THANKED EACH OTHER IN YOUR HEADS! SIMULTANEOUSLY!
HEH, WHAT? WHATEVER.
THE FISH IS THINKING ALL CRAZY.
WELCOME to
silverlake
BOYS BOYS BOYS. BABYSTEPS, I GUESS.

I MOVED GUNN TO SILVERLAKE SO LORNE'S FRIENDS COULD KEEP AN EYE ON HIM. HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A WHILE. IT'S NOT EASY.
I DON'T KNOW HOW I'LL REACT.
WHEN I SEE HIM, WILL I BE ABLE TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING OTHER THAN—
THERE'S THE MAN WHO KILLED MY SON.
AND THEN KILLED ME! MY SON I CAN SEE, HE'S WEAK AND A DOLT, BUT ME?!
FATHER, WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BIDE OUR TIME UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR TO STRIKE DOWN GUNN, NOT—
YOU'VE BEEN TIMID EVER SINCE YOU DIED, SON. YOU'RE BACK, MOVE ON.
YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, BURGE. YOUR SON IS BACK FROM THE DEAD AND HE WANTS TO HANG OUT WITH YOU, GET OUT OF HERE AND ENJOY THE MOMENT. PLAY SOME BASEBALL. GO FISHING. TALK ABOUT GIRLS.
WATCH YOUR TONGUE. THE SPELL PROTECTING SILVERLAKE IS BROKEN. HURTING CAN HAPPEN.
THAT'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.
LEAVE WHILE YOU CAN.

WOLFRAM & HART CAN'T PROTECT YOU NOW, BOY!
I FINALLY GET MY SPAWNING CLOAK!
NOBODY KILLS CHARLES GUNN!
HE WAS IMPORTANT TO HER. HE WAS IMPORTANT TO EVERYONE AROUND HER.
THOUGH IF HE EVER AWAKES, I MAY CHALLENGE HIM TO ARMED COMBAT FOR STRIKING ME DOWN IN HELL. AT WHICH POINT, HE WILL SURELY FALL. UNTIL THEN, YOU LET HIM REST AND REBUILD HIS STRENGTH.
HEED MY WORDS. THE LAST LORD WHO VENTURED INTO SILVERLAKE DID NOT.

THAT'S WHERE SHE'S BEEN. WOW. SHE IS...
...CONFUSED, YEAH. I'M NOT READY TO SEE HER. A LOT OF EMOTIONS THAT NEITHER OF US ARE COMFORTABLE WITH. GREAT FOR WRITING POETRY, BLOODY HORRIBLE FOR MY WELL-BEING. YOU WANNA GET OUT OF HERE, GET A PINT?
NO, THANKS. BUT SPIKE—
YES, DON'T WORRY, IF AND WHEN THE TIME COMES THAT YOU DO TRY TO TIP THE BALANCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IN THE FAVOR OF WHATEVER SIDE I'M NOT ON, I WILL ABSOLUTELY KILL YOU, NO PROBLEM.
UM.
I WAS GOING TO, YOU KNOW, THANK YOU. FOR EVERYTHING, FOR HELPING ME AND FOR LOOKING AFTER CONNOR AND... WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NOTHING, YOU'RE WELCOME, CHEERS MATE.
OKAY, ANGEL.
LEARN FROM THE PRIMORDIAL DEMON.
STOP BEING SELFISH AND HELP YOUR FRIEND.

THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY. I'M NOT, NOT GREAT WITH VERBALIZING MY FEELINGS.
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF HE COULD HEAR ME. HE'S IN A COMA, HAS BEEN FOR A MONTH.
GUNN COULD BE LOST.
BUT IF HE'S EVEN THE LEAST BIT AWARE...
...HE'S THINKING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
ABOUT WHAT HE DID.
IT WASN'T YOU.

I'VE BEEN THERE, TRUST ME. AND I KNOW IT WASN'T YOU.
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE VAMPIRE THING. I...
...I'VE MADE MISTAKES. BIG ONES. BUT, AND IT TOOK ME A TRIP TO HELL TO REALIZE THIS...
...A MAN ISN'T MEASURED BY THE MISTAKES HE'S MADE.
HE'S MEASURED BY WHAT HE DOES ABOUT THEM.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

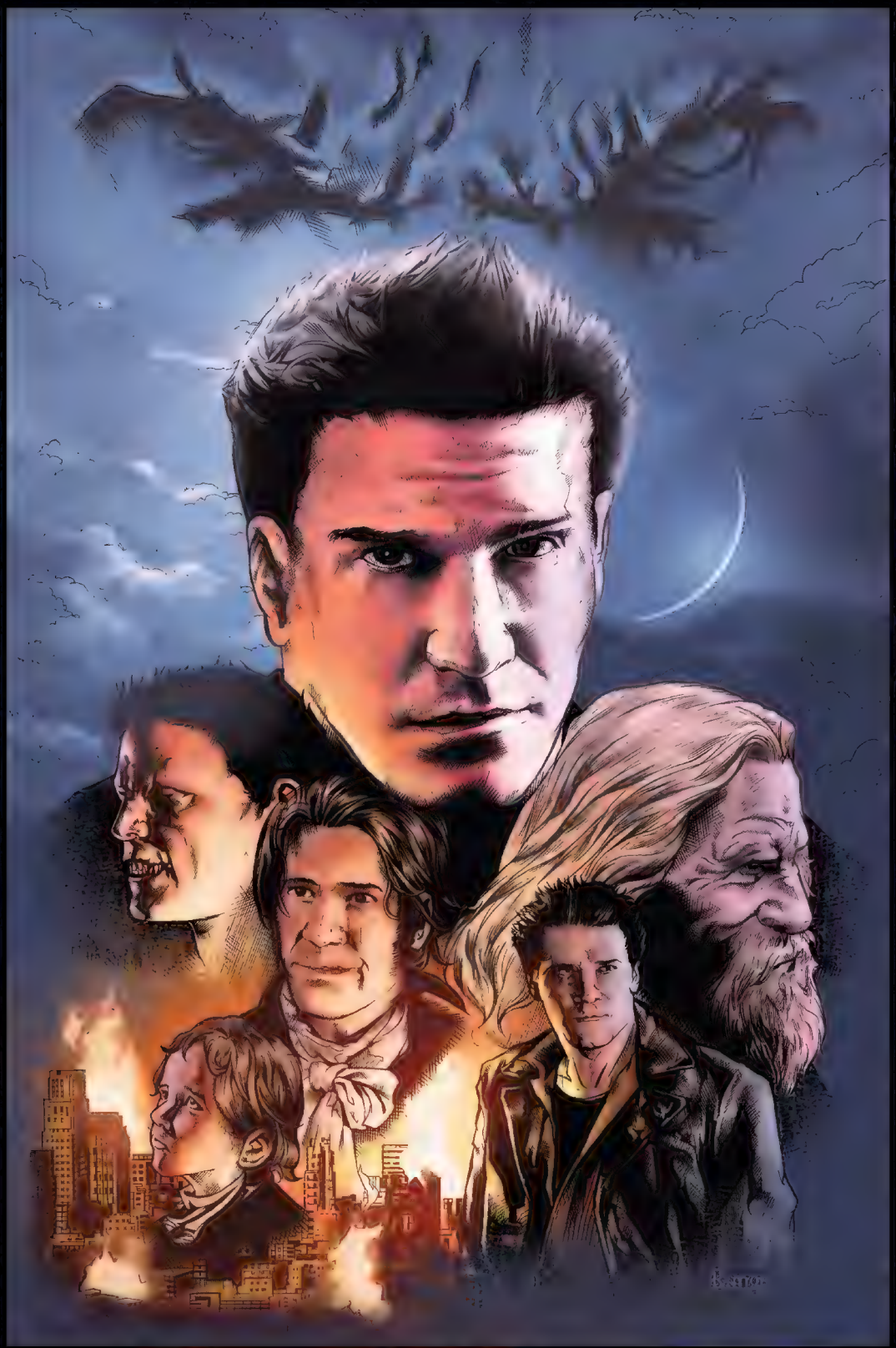
SEE? NOT GOOD WITH WORDS. IT WAS BABBLE IS WHAT IT WAS. I SHOULD HAVE JUST BROUGHT FLOWERS.
I JUST...
...I CAN HELP HIM.
ANGEL INVESTIGATIONS
IF HE WAKES UP AND HE'S HURTING, I CAN HELP HIM MAKE THINGS RIGHT.
LIKE I SAID, I'VE BEEN THERE. I KNOW MY WAY AROUND ATONEMENT.
IT'S WHAT I DO.

MY NAME IS ANGEL.
I'VE DONE VERY BAD THINGS. I'VE BEEN TOLD I'M DESTINED TO DO WORSE.
BUT FOR NOW...
...I'M HERE TO HELP.
ANGEL
AFTER THE FALL

art gallery

This Page: Art by Nick Runge

Opposite Page: Art by Alex Garner



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BLVD

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Opposite Page: Art by Alex Garner

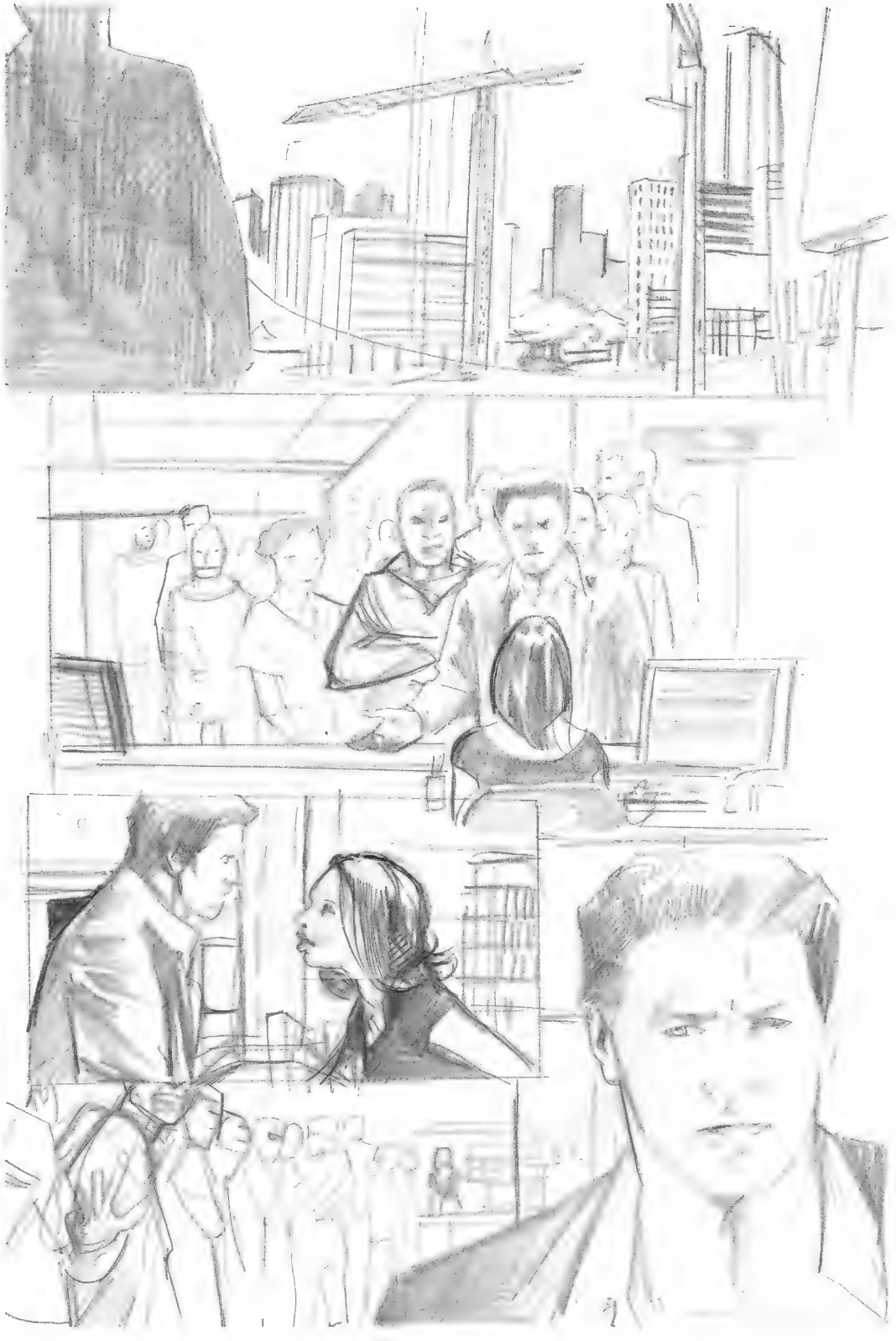
HART

Previous Page: Art by Franco Urru

This Page: Art by Stephen Mooney

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!
HAVE A GOOD ONE.
AND BEHAVE YERSELVES.

•THE GOD KING ILLYRIA•
STEPHEN 08



This Page: Art by Franco Urru

Opposite Page: Art by Franco Urru

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This Page: Art by Stephen Mooney

angel original issue one outline & series pitch

by Brian Lynch

After Joss and I sat down and agreed on some specifics (Demon Lords dividing Los Angeles, Gunn being vamped, Hell actually being in-between moments of reality), I wrote up this outline for the first issue. It was never meant to be the final outline, not even close. It was just to have something for Joss to read to push the conversation further.

That said, it is interesting how variations of certain scenes in this document made it into the final comic. Enjoy, and understand how nerve-wracking it was to know Joss was going to read this.

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ANGEL: AFTER THE FALL #1

One year later and L.A. looks like Hell. SPIKE, CONNOR, and ILLYRIA are fighting off some WINGED DEMONS who have attacked a few CIVILIANS scavenging for supplies. It's nighttime, so we can only kinda see L.A. is far more dilapidated than we remember.

Our heroes take a few demons down, but eventually the demons call for backup and the good guys are cornered. Spike is thrilled, ever since the last three or four brushes with death, he's got a bit of a God-complex and is eager to push his luck. Illyria is curious, she's actually learning about the demons as she fights them, as if this whole thing is part of a violent, science class field trip. Connor is the only one reacting like WE might (well, I would, you're probably way more brave), afraid for what comes next.

Suddenly, a bunch of demons are torched in a giant stream of fire. Our heroes look up: there's a giant DRAGON in the air, and someone riding it.

A few demons drop to the ground, their wings just being singed, the Dragon lands...

...and ANGEL gets the coolest of hero reveals as he gets off the back of the Dragon.

Spike comments on how backwards Angel is: he bragged about fighting the Dragon, but goody two shoes had to go and tame it instead.

But as we see Angel violently going to work on the remaining demons, we see the change he's gone through in the last year. Hair a mess (the horror!) somewhat of a crazed look on his face, he looks unhinged. He's a man undone.

As the reader doesn't know yet that the entire city of L.A. has gone to hell, it just looks like L.A.'s monster count has skyrocketed (let's let them assume Wolfram & Hart is still throwing their worst at the city, on account of being pissed at Angel and the gang).

The people that Angel and company saved seem grateful, but Angel brushes them off. We want the reader to assume it's because Angel is so disconnected (and he is) but in reality, and as the reader will gather by the end, it's because they're in Hell so they're not the nicest people either.

Angel goes back to the dragon, Connor tries to talk to him, but

Angel has lost it. We hear rumblings from one of them about how "it wasn't your fault."

FLASHBACK: the fight in the alleyway. Angel is taking down the baddies left and right, CHARLES GUNN, dying and surrounded, gets pulled away. Angel is about to pounce on someone who is clearly the power-hitter for Wolfram & Hart, and who is conjuring something up, super magic-style, when he sees Gunn pulled away by a gang of vamps.

My apologies for use of the phrase "super magic-style."

Back at Angel and company's HQ (I would love it to be the Hyperion). Nina comes, Angel doesn't talk to her, but that's more than fine with her...

...she was here to see Spike. See, they're together. Angel doesn't seem to mind, he's so disconnected it doesn't bother him. Bothers Spike ever so slightly. He doesn't want anyone saying he got Angel's rebounds again, and says he's quitting the moment the Dragon looks at him with flirty eyes.

Angel heads upstairs, away from the group, and talks to WESLEY. Wesley's dead, oh sure, but Wolfram & Hart hasn't let him move on yet. So here he is, Lilah-style, the go-between for Angel and the firm. After all, despite Angel's "discrepancies" he's still an employee, but Wesley figures he's just being kept around to toy with him, keep him from moving on so he can't be with Fred, OR to rub salt in Angel's wounds.

Angel doesn't need any more salt, no sir. Wesley maintains it's not his fault for what happened.

We FLASHBACK to the fight, as Gunn was being dragged away. Angel has to make the decision as to whether to stop the power player from doing whatever he's doing (and surely, it's big, as the sky is BREAKING above him) or save his friend. It comes down to this: will Angel save his friend or will Angel focus on the mission (which, admittedly, might just save everyone else...and his town).

"I wonder what Angel did," you're thinking. "Let me tell you," I type. Angel makes a last minute attempt to save Gunn, leaving the "power player" free to finish his mojo. Angel was too late; Gunn was nowhere to be found. That moment of hesitation. The ONE moment of hesitation cost him his friend. But what's worse...

FLASHBACK OVER. Angel goes to a window and looks out. HERE IT IS. We ain't in L.A. We're in Hell. Looks a lot like L.A.,

mind you, but make no mistake: because Angel tried to save Gunn, L.A. was sent to hell. He wasn't just guilt-ridden and crazed over Gunn's "death," he feels responsible for Wolfram & Hart sending Angel and everyone in L.A. he cared about straight to hell.

CUT AWAY to the vamp gang that we last saw pulling away Gunn from the group. They are attacking a girl, when Gunn shows up. A fight brewing? No sir, Gunn VAMPS OUT and sucks the girl dry. The gang watches. They didn't kill Gunn, they turned him. And he's pissed. Pissed that he put his faith into Angel, but when it came down to it, Angel still hesitated and let him be taken.

A voice from the shadows tells him that's how Angel is. Everyone is just a pawn. He just doesn't care.

Gunn smiles. He's going to make Angel care.

The vamp gang seems excited for the chance of a shot at Angel. Gunn looks to them. Sorry, but they're not going to be a part of it.

With that, a few well-placed arrows take down the entire gang, save for Gunn. Gunn smiles. For a while, he was pissed he was punished twice. Turned into a vamp AND sent to Hell. But now he knows why he was turned: to help him really understand how truly awful Angel is. And now he wants to help Angel realize it.

Holtz, crossbow in hand, steps into the light. Funny thing about hell, there are PLENTY of people here that have problems with Angel.

Overview of the series:

ANGEL has lost his way. He tried to make a difference, he tried to do the right thing, but he wound up making things worse. As such he's disconnected, and a bit crazy. Throughout the series, he's kinda forced back into the game as Gunn starts targeting his friends. And then he gets some glimmer of hope by the end of the Gunn-arc when he learns that the situation might not be permanent.

SPIKE is not unlike Bill Murray in GROUNDHOG DAY when he realizes he's not THE God, but maybe A God. Not literally, of course, but after facing death, and Hell, even dying, numerous times, he's feeling pretty pumped up and indestructible. PLUS now that he's in Hell, there are plenty of opportunities for fights at any given point. He's gonna receive a complete and utter beat-down at the hands of Gunn that will put a quick end to that.

WESLEY is back but only Angel knows. He doesn't want Angel to tell anyone, as Wesley doesn't want to face Illyria. When he does, he sees the face of his true love, which will drive him to take the bull by the horns and start becoming more proactive in finding a way back for Angel and friends.

ILLYRIA is also thrown by the reappearance of Wesley. She doesn't know why it's affecting her, and more Fred-like behavior is going to creep back to the surface and start throwing her.

CONNOR will be the key to Angel getting back to his humanity. Angel is very cold to him in the beginning, not that he doesn't love his son, he does, but he feels responsible for ripping the boy's normal life right out from under him. Connor will show him that it's a good thing he's there, as he's going to be as formidable as anyone else in the group, and surely, in the end, will be somewhat responsible for the heroes winning the day.

NINA is taking full advantage of the fact that Hell has both a giant sun AND moon going all the time, so she's feral and strong and can rip crap to shreds but is still pretty human.

GWEN is coming in a few issues in, originally approached by Gunn, but saying "no way, Gunn" and joining Angel and company.

DRAGON is going to get an agent and become a big movie star in Hell. Eventually he will forget who his true friends are, but when he gets arrested for drunk driving, who bails him out? Yes, his friends. Eventually he and the Angel crew will start a band. Or not.

Angel and the crew are going to find other lost souls in Hell, those that were placed there because of "loopholes," or, like them, punishment for going against evil. The hotel will be bustling with souls in need of saving.

Haven't figured out LORNE yet. I would love if Lorne could work out his issues before Angel gets to him, and as such, could guide him back into the light.

Eventually, the first arc (six issues in length) ends with Gunn setting up an army to go back to our dimension (be it to take down everyone else Angel cares about that aren't hell-bound, i.e., Buffy and company, or simply to take advantage of an Angel-free Earth). Angel, of course, will stop it, and in the process see that it IS possible to get back to our Earth, which will be the journey for the next arc.

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Joss' reaction helped shape the book even further. Out came Holtz, as Joss thought there were two many human characters as is. Out came Angel's mussed up hair, as a comic book Angel with mussed up hair doesn't look like Angel. Little things like that...

...aaaaand big things were addressed. The two most important things that came as a result of this document were (a) the gang shouldn't be back together immediately. They weren't a superhero team; they were a group of individuals that were all in different states of mind. Also, (b) we made Angel human, realizing that he needed more obstacles (because losing a good friend and sending an entire city to hell aren't enough).

I hope this gives you some insight as to how our creative process worked. My next e-mail to Joss was all about how maybe Angel should be part of an organization called "The Dollhouse" wherein he assumes new identities of totally different people only to, get this, have his mind erased every week! Also, maybe Angel should be played by Eliza Dushku. Joss said he didn't like that idea and then I never heard from him again. Maybe I'll use that idea some day; I think it has potential.

ANGEL™

– AFTER THE FALL –

VOLUME 4

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